

WWII

DESTROYERS!

Their critical role in
WWII naval warfare

WWI

AMIENS, 1918

How Britain's first modern
army won the Great War

WWII

JAPANESE JUNGLE HOLDOUTS

The soldiers
who continued
fighting WWII
into the 1970s

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ON THE COVER:

A graphic portrait of Julius Caesar.
Photo Alamy Images

Who we are:

Military History Monthly aims to cover conflict on land, at sea, and in the air through all periods of history, with expert commentary written in an intelligent and accessible way.

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Welcome

By Dr Neil Faulkner



Julius Caesar was the greatest figure in Roman history. His career culminated in a civil war and dictatorship that destroyed the 500-year dominance of the Senate and inaugurated the 500-year rule of the emperors.

Like Napoleon – another epoch-straddling colossus – he was not only a revolutionary, but also a great commander. Or was he?

Our lead feature this issue is a sharp critique of Caesar's generalship by classical historian Bijan Omrani. Focusing on the two invasions of Britain in 55 and 54 BC, Omrani reinterprets Caesar's own *Gallic War* account to reveal a commander whose naked political ambition drove him to inexcusable military risks.

Elsewhere in this issue we have two features focused on East Asia. Tim Hannigan throws light on a little-known Napoleonic-era campaign, the British invasion of Java in 1811, while Mark Felton explores the extraordinary phenomenon of the Japanese 'jungle holdouts' – soldiers isolated at remote locations in 1945 who, in some cases, continued fighting World War II as late as the 1970s!

Our British Battle this month is Amiens, the 1918 offensive that used tanks, planes, and modern tactics to break the German line and inaugurate the Hundred Days Campaign which ended the First World War. We also have Patrick Boniface's analysis of the role of the destroyer in the Second World War.

Not least this month, we are launching a new occasional series by TV producer and historian Taylor Downing, who will be offering expert analysis of a selection of classic war movies. We start this time with Noël Coward's *In Which We Serve*.

Neil Faulkner.

Let us know what you think...

We would love to hear your opinions on this issue of the magazine. What are your favourite bits? What should we cover next issue? You can give us your feedback:

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Contents

FEATURED

14

Caesar in Britain

A very near run thing

Classics scholar Bijan Omrani reassesses the great Roman general's military reputation in light of his failed invasions of Britain.

ON THE
COVER



24

History of the British Army

Amiens, 8-12 August 1918

MHM analyses the battle that saw the British Army's transformation into an effective instrument of modern industrialised warfare.



38

1811

The British invasion of Java

Tim Hannigan recalls a forgotten imperial adventure taking place at the same time as Napoleon's invasion of Russia.



48

Japanese Jungle Holdouts

The men still fighting WWII in the 1970s

Mark Felton explores the bizarre legacy of Japanese soldiers who continued hostilities long after 1945.

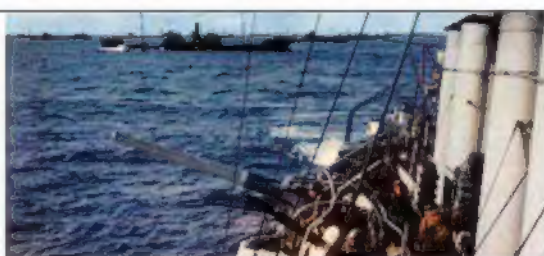


54

Destroyer!

The torpedo boat's evolution

Naval historian Patrick Boniface looks at how destroyers proved themselves in the deadliest maritime clashes of the Second World War.



Military History Monthly
Issue 30, March 2013
www.military-history.org

EVERY ISSUE



12

Dispatches

Welcome	3
News	6
Letters	9
Your Military History	12

What's on MHM Events Guide

22



Your guide to the best tours, events, and lectures coming up in 2013.

On Manoeuvres

Listings

62

Military History Monthly's summary of the best events coming up this March.

Museum

64

Keith Robinson explores the military museum at the home of the British Army.

War Zone

66

Stephen Roberts visits the little-known English Civil War battlefield of Cropredy Bridge.

Reviews

DVD

72

MHM editor Neil Faulkner reviews the commemorative edition of Ken Burns' *The Civil War*.

TV

73

The best films and documentaries on the Military History channel this March.

Books

74

Neil Faulkner reviews *The Battle for Syria, 1918-1920* by John D Grainger for our lead review. Other books include *The Spanish Civil War* by Julián Casanova and Sam Willis' *In the Hour of Victory: the Royal Navy at war in the Age of Nelson*.



82

Regulars

Opinion

10

Joe Tatton Brown takes issue with a central argument in Max Hastings' *All Hell Let Loose*.

War on Film

34

Launching a new occasional series, TV documentary producer and military historian Taylor Downing explores the story behind the wartime movie classic *In Which We Serve*.

Drawing Board

82

The Bristol Beaufighter: good at adapting, bad at its original job.

MHM Quiz

80

This month we have two book bundles from Pen & Sword to be won. Enter the MHM Quiz to be in with a chance of winning.



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DISPATCHES



Our round-up of this month's military history news stories.



HMS CAROLINE IS THROWN A LIFELINE

HMS *Caroline*, one of the world's most historically significant warships, whose future had been threatened by deterioration and neglect, is to receive £1 million from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF).

This vital grant awarded to the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) will now enable urgent repair works to be undertaken that will prevent further decay to the Belfast-based light cruiser while plans are finalised for its long-term future in the city. Works will include making the ship windproof and watertight, and removing dangerous asbestos, all done while the ship is afloat.

Professor Dominic Tweddle, Director General of the NMRN, welcomed the announcement: 'We cannot overestimate the significance of HMS *Caroline*. It is the only remaining floating survivor of World War I. NMRN is thrilled that the funding is now in place to secure it and prevent any further deterioration.'

Northern Ireland's Minister for the Economy, Trade and Investment, Arlene Foster, commented on the intended plans for the vessel: 'Our ultimate aim is to transform the ship into a world-class floating museum in time for the Battle of Jutland centenary in 2016, as I believe HMS *Caroline* has huge potential as a visitor experience.'

NMRN's *Caroline* Project Director Captain John Rees says work can now start on repairs to prevent further ingress of wind and water. 'We will be seeking to repair upper deck drainage (scuppers), replace perished seals on hatches and doors, remove and refurbish portholes, repair the leaking funnel deck, and lift areas of rotting deck and repair. Other essential work will include inspections of internal tanks and coffer dams, cleaning and repairing where leaks are found, and the necessary asbestos remediation to enable this work.'

Built in Merseyside in 1914, HMS *Caroline* is the last survivor of the Battle of Jutland, the First World War's biggest and most important sea battle: Jutland was the only main fleet action between the two biggest navies in the world at the time.

The speed of light cruisers like *Caroline* – with a maximum close to 30 knots – enabled the Royal Navy to respond to the increasing threat of long-range torpedo attack on battleships and also to locate enemy naval formations and convey the news back to the main fleet.

When the war ended, *Caroline* became a static training-ship based in Belfast. During World War II, she was back in action protecting



the North Atlantic convoys from U-boat attacks. In 1945 she returned to her role as a static drill-ship in Belfast until she was decommissioned in 2011, making her the longest-serving ship in commission in the Royal Navy after HMS *Victory*.

One of the most significant warships of the 20th century, HMS *Caroline* is one of only 200 vessels in the National Historic Fleet. She is barely changed from the day she was constructed, being 80% complete.

An urgent funding application to NHMF was made earlier this year by the NMRN in a bid to rescue HMS *Caroline*. In September, NHMF pledged £1 million, underpinning the partnership between the NMRN, the MoD, and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in Northern Ireland, to create a future for HMS *Caroline*.

'Liberated' letters delivered

A collection of letters from German troops to their loved ones have finally been delivered, 71 years after they were posted.

The letters were sent by soldiers stationed in Jersey during the Occupation of the Channel Islands. They were then 'liberated' from a *Feldpostamt* (German Army post office) by a group of young men who were against the Occupation. They remained hidden until earlier this year, when they were brought to Jersey Archive.

Working together with the Jersey Post, the archive decided to try to get as many of the letters to their intended recipients, or their relatives, as they could. With help from the Deutsche Post, the Jersey Post embarked on a remarkable trail of detective work to discover if any of the original addresses still existed and, if so, whether the present-day occupants knew the whereabouts of any of the families who had lived there during World War II.

Michael McNally, Head of International Development at the Jersey Post said, 'When we were first asked to help we thought it would be an impossible task. So much time has passed and Germany has changed considerably, both geographically and demographically. But after our initial conversation with counterparts at Deutsche Post, we grew more confident that we could do something. I was there when the letters were finally handed over and I can tell you it was a really



emotional experience for all – that's the power of receiving something handwritten from someone close to you.'

The letters were all posted at the German field post-office at Falle's shop, which was at 12-14 Beresford Street. Some Islanders at the time were showing signs of defiance. 'V for Victory' signs had begun to appear and small acts of resistance – such as stealing the German soldiers' letters home – began to occur.

However, this was also the second Christmas German soldiers had spent in the Island, and morale was beginning to wane among the young men stationed there. Occupation diarist Leslie Sinel noted that at this time the spirit of the occupying forces was very low. This feeling of despondency and homesickness shows in the greetings sent home in December 1941. In one letter a soldier writes, 'I wish you a Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year. But what I hope most is that the war will come to an end soon, so that we can all enjoy life again.'

On Tuesday 18 December, 71 years to the day after the letters were supposed to have arrived in Germany, representatives from Jersey Post and Deutsche Post hand-delivered the ten recovered letters to the descendants of the original senders.

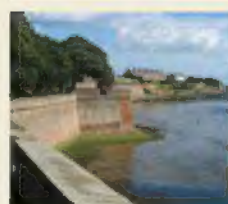
The two companies will continue their search for senders, addressees, or their families, and the chances are good that most of the letters will eventually be delivered.



NEWS IN BRIEF

DISCOVERING BRITAIN

A new series of walks is being produced by the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers).



They explore different places, explaining how forces of nature, people, and the economy shaped the landscape. Several of the walks have significant interest for lovers of military history, particularly those about the defensive positioning of cities, fortifications, and battle sites.

You can explore the military heritage of Salisbury Plain or the fortifications of Berwick-upon-Tweed, re-live the English Civil War in Westminster, discover the defences around Rye and Winchelsea in East Sussex, and explore prehistoric sites such as Uffington Castle or Second World War defences in the Thames Estuary.

The walks are self-guided and can be downloaded for free from the Discovering Britain website (www.discoveringbritain.org). There are 50 walks currently on the website, with new ones being added all the time.

FORT FUNDING

Some of Surrey's leading conservation organisations are working together to reveal the lesser-



known military history of Reigate Fort.

Funding has been granted to the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Board, which is working with the National Trust, Gatton Trust, the Surrey Youth Support Service, and Surrey County Archaeological Unit to devise an exciting programme of educational and research events for local communities to take part in.

The project, called Front Line Surrey Hills, will run over the next two years and will include fort garrison days, living history events, and many walks and talks.

OLDEST BRITISH VETERAN DIES



Alfie Fripp, the oldest surviving British Second World War prisoner-of-war has died at the age of 98. Fripp's family announced his death on

Facebook, *The Independent* reported. He had been hospitalised in Bournemouth in southern England.

Frapp, who enlisted in the Royal Air Force in 1930 when he was 17, retired in 1969 with the rank of squadron leader.

In 1939 he was newly married when he was in the crew of a plane shot down over Germany. He spent more than five years in a succession of German prison-camps, including Stalag Luft III, the camp made famous by the mass breakout depicted in *The Great Escape*.

In 1945 he and other PoWs held in camps in Poland were forced to march in winter to Germany as the Red Army approached. After he left the RAF, Fripp and his wife Vera settled in Bournemouth, where he taught in a school for several years. In 2009 he visited Stalag Luft III for the first time since he had been a prisoner there.

Mark Banning

Battlefield Tours



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"To see the field where he died and to pinpoint the place of death to within no more than a hundred yards was a chilling and emotional experience". LC., Guildford

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ENTENTE CORDIALE, NOT A TREATY

With regard to your article on the Battle of Mons (*MHM* 27), Britain and France never at any point pre-war 'became allies against Germany'. While there were informal military discussions between Britain and France, the *Entente Cordiale* was not an alliance in the true sense of the word. It did not have the legal standing of an alliance, and there was certainly no parliamentary ratification of any military discussions that Foreign Secretary Grey may have had with French military or political representatives. These discussions were always informal.

Britain was not an island fortress that would have perished in a 'matter of weeks'. At no point pre-1914 did Britain have less than a 2:1 advantage over Germany in warship tonnage. Britain as a naval power had a complete monopoly in sea power in the North Sea and the risk of loss of this advantage was small.

With regard to U-boat warfare, it is hard to envisage any scenario in which this would have had a crippling effect on Britain in a matter of weeks. Comments on Britain perishing so swiftly are sensationalist and not factually correct.

The claim that that Britain was 'committed to military action in Europe' as a result of agreements made between 1904 and 1907 is incorrect. It was the 1839 Treaty of London, to uphold Belgium's neutrality, which was used to justify Britain's entry into the war, but it involved no obligation on Britain to support military action in Europe.

Your article suggests that Germany, as an emerging industrial powerhouse, was directly threatening Britain's world interests to such an extent that war became likely between them. It is true that German industrial production had narrowly exceeded that of Britain by 1914, but it would be wrong to suggest that pre-1914 Germany was a serious rival to Britain's financial or political power on a global basis.

Britain's foreign investment was significantly higher than Germany's. Britain was still a lender of last resort in world markets, and yields on British bonds were lower than those of Germany pre-war. This suggests that world markets still considered Britain a safer bet economically. France and Russia always remained a greater threat than Germany to Britain's world interests pre-war. That is precisely why Britain established the 1904 *Entente Cordiale* and the 1908 Anglo-Russian *Entente*.

Jason Stewart
Ruislip

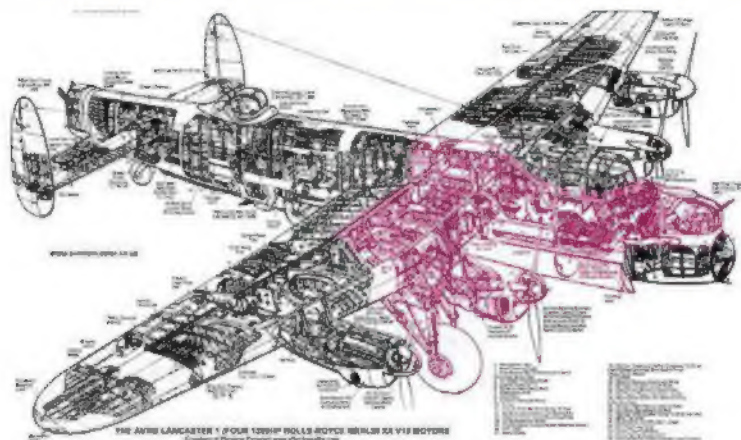


DIAGRAM A DUD

Your detailed diagram of a Lancaster aircraft (*MHM* 27, p. 6) shows a Lancaster fitted with an FN-64 ventral (lower mid) turret. Such turrets were only fitted to early Lancasters, for the turret was extremely hard to aim, and they were removed quite quickly as they were considered 'dead weight'. As the ED427 (the aircraft the team are hoping to recover) was a Mark III variant, it wouldn't have been fitted with a ventral turret.

Sadly, later in the war, as the Luftwaffe perfected *Schräge Musik* for attacking bombers from below, such turrets might then have been of value, and in some cases, both officially and unofficially, some downwards-firing weapons were installed. The blanked-off apertures for the FN-64 were sometimes used, but could not be when the H2S radar blister was installed.

Colin Pomeroy



WHAT ABOUT THE CANADIANS?

I am the son of a Canadian soldier who landed in Scotland on Christmas Day 1940, and returned home in 1945 after spending some quality time at Dieppe and other exciting places in Europe.

I read in the November issue (*MHM* 26, p. 38): 'a 4,000-vessel armada would carry the invading TWO armies – British 2nd and American 1st – on D-Day'.

Someone really screwed up! What about the 3rd Canadian Division that landed about 14,000 men on Juno, plus about 450 men air-dropped behind enemy lines, as well as roughly 10,000 Canadian sailors and numerous other Canadians flying fighters and bombers?

I should also mention the fact that the Canadian division reached further inland than any other force on D-Day!

Hopefully you will print a correction in your magazine ASAP...

Don Honeychurch
Alberta, Canada

IS MAX HASTINGS RIGHT ABOUT THE WESTERN ALLIES?

Joe Tatton Brown takes issue with a central argument in Max Hastings' new study of the Second World War, *All Hell Let Loose*, featured in *MHM* 15.

Joe Tatton Brown specialises in operational research, which he studied at Brunel University following a first degree in maths and engineering at Cambridge.



Above Part of a batch of 11,000 Germans taken prisoner in the Saarland in spring 1945.

On page 441 of *All Hell Let Loose: the World at War 1939-45*, Max Hastings concludes: 'The Western Allied armies, however, by deferring a major landing on the continent until 1944, restricted themselves to a marginal role...'. Is he right? The answer is probably not.

His argument is based on the witty quotation from Evelyn Waugh: 'How is victory possible except by wholesale slaughter?' The Russians killed a ratio of nine Germans to every one German killed by the Western Allies – 4,500,000 killed by the Russians compared with 500,000 killed by the British, the Americans, and their allies.

So the ratio of Russian battlefield contribution to British and American is 90% to 10%, reasons Hastings. He implies that there was only one way to destroy the *Wehrmacht*: by killing German soldiers.

Killed or captured?

But there was another way, which he completely ignores in this paragraph: putting German soldiers into wire cages or prisoner-of-war camps.

The Russians' favoured method of destroying the *Wehrmacht* was indeed by killing German soldiers. The Western Allies' favoured method was to take prisoners: by the end of April 1945, when fighting was still going on in Berlin, they had about 3.3 million German soldiers in captivity all over Europe, as well as the UK. The great majority of these had been

The Russians' favoured method of destroying the *Wehrmacht* was by killing German soldiers. The Western Allies' method was to take prisoners.

captured in North-West Europe from D-Day onwards.

The large-scale capture of German soldiers by the British and the Americans started in Tunisia in May 1943, when 110,000 Germans surrendered. In the Normandy campaign, which ended in August 1944, a further 200,000 German soldiers surrendered. The invasion of southern France, Operation Dragoon, in August yielded another 130,000 German prisoners.

In the autumn and winter of 1944, there were many battles in which many Germans surrendered, including the Battle of the Scheldt in October 1944, which resulted in the capture of 41,000 soldiers. In March 1945, 293,000 German soldiers surrendered when they were cut off on the west banks of the Rhine. By the end of March 1945, the haul of German prisoners in north-west Europe since D-Day amounted to 1.3 million.

By early April 1945, the Allied High Command was aware that the German armies facing them had been defeated. It was merely a matter of finishing them off by rounding up their soldiers.

HITLER'S SUICIDE

The fate of Hitler, Berlin, and Germany was still being decided up to the end of April. At the beginning of the Battle of Berlin, which started on 16 April, Hitler could still have flown out of the city and continued fighting elsewhere, but the fact that about 750,000 German soldiers surrendered to the Western Allies between 17 and 30 April made this option less and less viable. The Ruhr pocket had completely surrendered by 20 April, the Hartz mountain pocket on 22 April, and Bremen on 26 April. The lack of resistance of German soldiers facing the Western Allies outside Berlin was one of the factors that persuaded Hitler to give up and kill himself on 30 April, effectively bringing the European war to an end.

The Times newspaper reported on 2 April

The report is about the enemy's spirit, and the state of the prisoners captured is highly encouraging. But the mass of the armies on the Western Front, which have not the shocks of the Allied Armies appear to be in a state to enter a general retreat. If the General Headquarters states that the German High Command is relaxing their control over many areas, large and small, of the German forces it may be accepted that his words are based upon information from prisoners of war and other sources of reliable origin. The next few days are likely to witness a further stage in the collapse and disintegration of the German armies facing the Anglo-American armies.

The Times of 13 April provides a fuller analysis of the German Army's collapse in the West

CASE OF ENEMY'S COLLAPSE
ANSWER TO RUSSIAN CRITICISM
THE RUSSIAN MILITARY CRITICS CONTINUE
THE ADVANCE OF SOME GERMAN
APPARATUS TO THE ALLIED ADVANCE
ACROSS THE FRONTIER IN A SHOW OF
CHALLENGE, BUT IT HAS CAUSED SOME
MAJOR LOSSES IN WHICH HAVE EXTENDED
TO CAPTURE OF OUR RUSSIAN PRISONERS
THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS THAT
ZONES OF THE DEFEAT AND DESTRUCTION

after the situation has been
overlooked by the German Army
Group B had a total of 100,000

Army Group B, the result of the
which the Allies were opposed
when the last of the German
consisted of the armies of the
of the Panzer, and several, comprising
some 31 divisions, which is shown
Panzer Group B, the result of the
a formidable force, by far the strongest
of the German army groups. Now it has
been virtually all destroyed in the
of the enemy is forced to
of the Ruhr, which is being
fully captured and reduced.

Now, only a large proportion of
Army Group B have escaped and are
now being held up in the
And 1,500,000 German have been
prisoners of war since D-Day.

The Times continued on 18 April:

HUGE GERMAN LOSSES ON
WESTERN FRONT
755,573 PRISONERS IN 16 DAYS
The enormous German losses on
the Western Front are shown by the
German newspaper yesterday that during
the first 16 days of April 1945, 755,573
prisoners were taken. German
on losses in the same period were
3,969 aircraft.

Of these losses, only a minority, 266,000,

came from the Ruhr pocket. A couple of
days later, on 20 April, *The Times* quoted
General Bradley as saying that 316,930
prisoners had been taken in the pocket –
the figure given by Max Hastings in *All Hell
Let Loose*. But on 19 April it had reported

2,055,575 PRISONERS SINCE D-DAY
It is difficult to understand how that
the total number of prisoners taken on the
Western Front from D-Day up to
and including May 1945, is
is 2,055,575, of whom 266,930 came from
the Ruhr pocket.

The Daily Telegraph on 24 March had
described the surrender of 120 German
soldiers to a solitary British airman:

A copy of a Scottish Daily newspaper
with a single occupant, an RAF Wing
Commander, coming across the River
from Garry Island near Wexford. 'I have come
to know to get my 120 prisoners' he said
to the officer commanding the Scottish
unit. 'The German soldiers were taken
by the British troops on the island by the
Allied forces. I have taken them to the
where he put in the officer commanding
the unit. The question of the Wing
Commander's name is known. 'I have
taken them to Wexford', said the German. 'You
can't', said the Wing Commander, 'we have
captured it.' 'Then we will turn over to
you', said the German.

Finally, in a report dated Wednesday
2 May, the *Daily Telegraph* stated that 'The
Allied armies in the west captured more
than 1,500,000 prisoners during April.'

The Western role

To say that the losses of 2.9 million (2.5
million prisoners and 0.4 million killed)
up to 16 April 1945, rising to 3.8 million
(3.3 million prisoners and 0.5 million
killed) up to 30 April 1945, inflicted on
the *Wehrmacht* by the Western Allies
made only a marginal contribution
to its destruction is to give a seriously
unbalanced assessment.

Because the Americans and
the British fought in a relatively
civilised way and generally treated
their prisoners well, it became
increasingly difficult for the Nazi
hardcore to motivate German soldiers
in the west, certainly from mid March
1945 onwards.

The Western Allies captured more

than six times as many German soldiers
as they killed while the war lasted –
effectively up to the end of April 1945.
By this date, the Western Allies had
destroyed (killed and captured) about
25% of the *Wehrmacht*, many more
than Max Hastings' marginal 10%.
By 30 April 1945 the Russians had

destroyed (killed and captured) only
about 6.5-7.5 million German soldiers
(4.5 million killed and 2-3 million
captured), approximately 43-50%
of the *Wehrmacht*. ☐

Below German prisoners-of-war are marched into
captivity in spring 1945, watched by Scottish troops.



THE WOMEN CONQUISTADORS

The human touch: stories of war and conflict from readers of *MHM*.

Jules Stewart is a regular *MHM* contributor and historian.



Left Queen Isabel of Castile, without whose power and influence none of the female Conquistadors could have sailed to the Americas.

her own right and not as the consort of her husband King Fernando of Aragón. It was Isabel who encouraged Columbus to establish an overseas empire for the newly unified kingdom of Spain, and it was she who provided the funds for his first voyage. And this from the country that gave the world the word 'machismo'.

By the end of the 15th century, in Spain as elsewhere in Europe, the male population had been decimated by decades of constant warfare, from the Hundred Years' War (ending in 1453) to the final expulsion of the Moors from Granada in 1492. At that time, a Spanish woman found herself faced with two choices in life: find a partner among the dearth of available men, or don the habit.

New World Amazons

The discovery of America changed this panorama by opening up opportunities for adventure and personal enrichment in the New World. In this scenario, women began to take on a protagonist role hitherto unimaginable for the 'weaker' sex. Married women embarked from Seville with their soldier husbands, while others took to the sea in search of matrimony in the colonies, very much in the mould of the British mumsahibs who two centuries later would sail to India hoping to snare an officer of good family. As a result, in the apex years of Spain's imperial expansion, women came to account for nearly 30% of the voyagers to the New World colonies.

More than 500 years after Columbus's first voyage to America – or *Las Indias*, the name by which the colonies were erroneously known – 'the story we are told completely ignores the role of women', says Spanish Rear-Admiral Gonzalo Rodríguez González-Aller. 'The denial of a female presence only serves to reinforce the Black Legend and the stereotype of the bloodthirsty Conquistador, with no mention of the crucial female legacy.'

Many of these women displayed a remarkable strength of character, refusing to be left on *terra firma* while their husbands went to wage war overseas. Shortly before Pedro Arias Dávila was to lead the largest Spanish expedition to the New World (19 vessels and 1,500 men) in 1514, the general received a letter from his wife Isabel de Bobadilla demanding to be taken on the voyage. 'Wherever fortune may lead you,' she wrote, 'be it on the furious waves of the sea or to face horrible dangers on land, I shall be by your side. I offer you the choice: cut my throat with your sword or agree to take me with you.'

Señora captain

Isabel de Barreto was the wife of Álvaro de Mendaña, who had been appointed captain-general of the Solomon Islands. In 1596, she joined her husband's expedition to the South Pacific archipelago, but *en route* they were battered by storms so severe that only one of the four galleons reached the islands. Some of the crew mutinied when the gold and pearls they had been promised failed to materialise. Wielding a machete,

Jules Stewart takes a look at some of the fierce female fighters from the time of the Spanish conquest of the Americas.

Mention the Spanish conquest of the New World and the names of illustrious Conquistadors come to mind: Hernán Cortés, who brought down the Aztec empire; Francisco Pizarro, the conqueror of Peru; and a host of grim-faced, bearded men in breastplates and steel bonnets who made the perilous Atlantic crossing in the 16th and 17th centuries in search of plunder and glory.

But what of Isabel Barreto, Spain's first and only female Admiral of the Imperial Fleet? What is known to history of Inés Suárez, who accompanied her famous lover Pedro de Valdivia in the conquest of Chile, and fought with the army in the siege of Santiago? Then there was María de Estrada, another valiant warrior, who battled – sword in hand – alongside Cortés during the 'Sorrowful Night' massacre of Tenochtitlan. And towering above them all stood Catalina de Erauso, the 'lieutenant-nun', as fearsome a fighter as any man, whose exploits earned the praise of King Felipe III and Pope Urban VIII.

Of course, none of these people, men or women, would have set sail for America had it not been for the most powerful Spanish woman of all, Queen Isabel of Castile, who ruled in

Isabel fought alongside her husband to put down the rebellion. The mutineers were overcome, but Mendaña was killed in the battle. The survivors, many of them struck down by malaria, elected Isabel to skipper the sole remaining warship onward to the Philippines.

Thus Isabel acquired her late husband's rank of fleet admiral. 'Isabel de Barreto took the ship from the Solomon Islands to the Philippines, and the sufferings endured on this journey put her leadership abilities to the test,' says historian Mariela Beltrán. 'She took charge of the galleon and imposed an iron-clad discipline on the crew. The few who reached the Philippines alive remained there, where Isabel remarried Captain Fernando de Castro, a knight of the Order of Santiago.'

No less courageous a woman was Inés Suárez, the mistress of Pedro de Valdivia, the Spanish Crown's governor of Chile. Suarez earned her warrior fame in the defence of the city of Santiago in 1541. Several Indian chieftains had been taken prisoner in the siege, and Suárez, standing in as military commander of the garrison while Valdivia was off fighting elsewhere, took her sword and decapitated the prisoners. She hurled their heads over the walls at the attackers, who fled in terror. On his return to liberated Santiago, Valdivia awarded his lover a medal for bravery.

Swashbuckling women

María de Estrada's military prowess was of truly epic proportions. On the night of 30 June 1520, Hernán Cortés and his followers were forced to fight their way out of Tenochtitlan (the present-day Mexico City) when it was discovered that the Aztec king Moctezuma II, a hostage of the Spaniards, had been treacherously murdered. María de Estrada, who accompanied the Spanish troops, brandished her sword with such fury that, as noted in contemporary chronicles, 'she exceeded the efforts of any man'.



Left Catalina de Erauso, or Francisco Loyola as she was known, the most fearsome of all the female Conquistadors.

Estrada survived the massacre of up to 800 Spanish soldiers who fled the city that night, and left no doubt in her memoirs as to the tenacity of the female fighting spirit. 'It is not right for Spanish women to allow their husbands to go to fight on their own. The Indians must be made to understand that the Spanish are so brave, even their women know how to wage war.'

The most extraordinary woman swashbuckler of them all was Catalina de Erauso, who in 1600, at the age of 15, escaped her convent to wander the streets of her native San Sebastián, which she had never seen in her life. Erauso fled into the woods, where she cut her hair short and fashioned a shirt and trousers out of her blue habit, taking the name Francisco Loyola. She reached the port of Bilbao, where she was jailed for a month for having beaten senseless several boys who had taunted her in the street.

That was when Erauso decided to set sail for the New World rather than risk being unmasked and sent back to the convent. As luck would have it, the ship's captain turned out to be her uncle, who failed to recognise her. She signed on, and when they were docked in Cartagena de las Indias, loading a cargo of silver for the return journey, in her own words 'I struck my uncle a hard blow when he was asleep, relieving him of 500 pesos'. She leapt ashore and went to seek her fortune elsewhere in the colonies.

Catalina de Erauso

Erauso's further exploits read like an Indiana Jones adventure tale. In a shop in Lima she was attacked by three men who had not reckoned on her fighting skills. She killed two of the men, and escaped to Lima, later enlisting in a regiment that was off to campaign in Chile. At the port of Concepción she came across the governor's secretary, who turned out to be a brother she had not seen since she was given up to the convent at the age of four. Erauso later killed him, by accident she claims, in a battle at night.

In Chile, Erauso's column came under attack by Indians, who overran the town of Valdivia. 'We counterattacked and did battle with them three or four times,' she recounts in her autobiography. 'They slew many of our troops and made off with our standard.' Erauso gave chase with a few soldiers, 'trampling and killing, and receiving some damage to myself'. She took a spear thrust in the shoulder and three arrow wounds. But she returned with the regimental colours and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

In another battle, she unhorsed the Indian chief and 'I immediately had him hanged from a tree'. She later plunged her sword into the heart of a fellow officer who accused her of cheating at cards, and she was arrested for killing a man in another duel but escaped torture by virtue of being a Basque, who were exempt under Inquisition law.

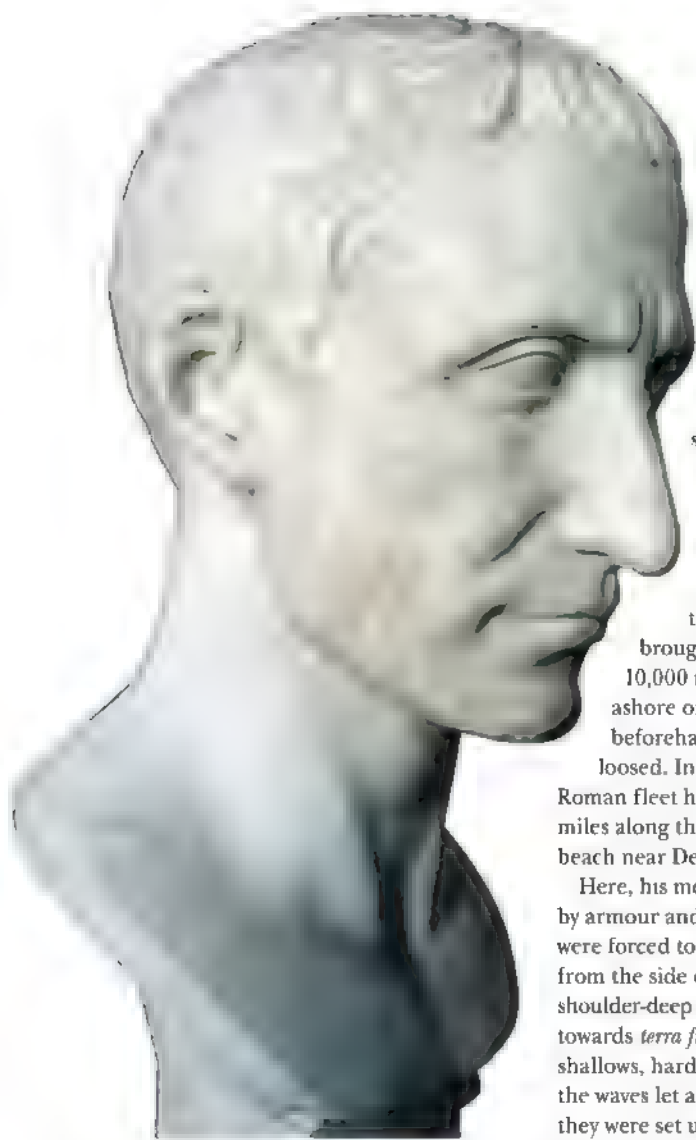
The Bishop of Lima, having determined that she was a virgin (we are not told how he acquired that piece of intelligence), allowed Erauso to return to Spain. She was received and decorated at Court by King Felipe III, and in Rome Pope Urban VIII granted her permission to continue her life dressed as a man, 'charging me to live honestly henceforth and to abstain from offending my neighbours'.

The last entry in Erauso's memoirs has her in Naples, where on the wharf she became the butt of a joke by a group of girls. The girls made themselves scarce when Erauso threatened them with 'a hundred whacks on the head and a hundred slashes to whomever may wish to defend you'. ☞

CAESAR IN BRITAIN

A VERY NEAR RUN THING

Classics scholar **Bijan Omrani** has been reading between the lines of the great Roman general's memoirs and reassessing his military reputation.



Above Julius Caesar: warlord, revolutionary, dictator. But was he really one of history's greatest military commanders?

As the sun began to set off the Kent coast

on 25 August 55 BC, a Roman expeditionary force led by Julius Caesar was making its first landing on British soil. Nothing had gone according to plan, and Caesar's men were fighting for survival.

Their commander had assumed that the two legions he had brought with him, just over 10,000 men, would have come ashore on dry land at Dover hours beforehand without a shot being loosed. Instead, the 100-strong Roman fleet had been driven several miles along the coast to an unfamiliar beach near Deal.

Here, his men, weighed down by armour and heavy equipment, were forced to jump several metres from the side of their transports into shoulder-deep seawater. As they waded towards *terra firma* through unknown shallows, hardly able to push through the waves let alone keep rank or fight, they were set upon by British warriors from the shore.

The British attacked ferociously, driving chariots into the sea, hurling spears, shouting curses, and cutting down many Roman soldiers in the chaos.

Right Caesar's first attempt to invade Britain showed an overambitious military leader seeking glory. His poor planning and lack of organisation nearly led to the eradication of his best two legions.

Glory versus generalship

This fiasco had nothing to do with bad luck over the weather or the prowess of British warriors. The fault lay with Caesar. He had allowed his drive for glory to get the better of his generalship.

Caesar claims in his own account of the war – *De Bello Gallico*, 'The Gallic War', the main source for the conflict – that the attack on Britain was a military necessity. It was not. Reading between the lines and interpreting afresh the evidence Caesar himself provides, we can tell that his judgement was clouded by his yearning for showy success. The story of Caesar's first attack on Britain is a classic study in how political ambition can get in the way of successful war-making.

Caesar had begun his conquest of Gaul in 58 BC. He had just been appointed governor of the small fragment of Gaul then held by the Roman Empire, equivalent to modern-day Provence, and was eager to make his mark.

Using the excuse that migrating Gallic and Germanic tribes might sweep down into Italy and attack Rome, he led his forces deep into non-Roman territory, battling peoples as far north as Belgium.

For the first two years he seemed unstoppable, winning victory after victory. Gallic tribes all the way up the



Atlantic coast surrendered without him ever coming near them, and to mark Caesar's apparent subjugation of the region the Roman Senate voted 15 days of thanksgiving in his honour.

The campaign unravels

At the beginning of 56 BC, everything began to fall apart. Caesar thought he had finished with Gaul, and was already turning his mind to further conquests in Illyricum, modern-day Croatia.

Everything began to fall apart...
The Gauls realised the Romans had come to stay, and quickly broke into revolt.

Below In 55 BC Caesar crossed the Rhine to assault the German tribes in an attempt, he claimed, to stop them harassing Gaul. Despite being the first Roman general to cross the river, however, the glory he eagerly sought eluded him as the tribes swiftly withdrew.

However, beyond taking the children of various Gallic aristocrats hostage and stationing troops across the territory, he had done little to secure Roman power. When the Gauls realised that the Romans had come to stay, they quickly broke into revolt, seizing Roman officers and laying siege to their more vulnerable camps.

Caesar had to stay in Gaul to fight the uprising. It was a much less glamorous business than conquest. Caesar's men were used to set-piece battles, but at this point they became bogged down in a guerrilla war with Gallic and Germanic tribesmen who struck suddenly and quickly and then retreated into the deep forests and marshes of uncleared wilderness.

This was the context for Caesar's decision to attack Britain. Frustrated by his loss of momentum, he began to plan a series of dynamic new operations. At first sight, they look sensible: he says that the aim was to cut off external support to the Gallic rebels. But on closer examination they seem to reveal little military purpose – beyond trying to win the applause of the Roman public.

The primacy of politics

It is easy to guess why Caesar might have needed such approval at this point. As the campaign faltered, critics in Rome raised their voices against him. Some quick successes would silence them

Besides, a desire for conspicuous achievement was at the heart of Caesar's character. He conveys this himself, in an understated way, when he refers repeatedly in *De Bello Gallico* to his 'customary success'

The Roman historian Suetonius makes the point more vividly. When Caesar was on his first colonial posting to Spain in his early thirties, he saw a statue of Alexander the Great. Beholding it, he wept, thinking that Alexander by his thirties had conquered the known world, while he himself had achieved nothing.

His first such exploit in 55 BC was an assault on the German tribes across the Rhine. He claimed this as necessary to deter them from harassing Gaul.

Caesar was the first Roman general to cross the Rhine, but true glory eluded him. The tribes he had hoped to engage in battle withdrew, leaving Caesar in an exasperating game of shadow boxing. Trying to salvage some credit for the endeavour, he spends more time in *De Bello Gallico* discussing the technical achievement of a bridge over the Rhine than he does recounting the military events of the campaign.

It was at this point that he turned his attention to Britain

A wild gamble

Every indication shows that Caesar's decision to attack Britain was dictated



Right Roman legionaries advance to the assault.
Below right At the chaotic beach landing, the Romans, unnerved by ferocious-looking British warriors, were forced to disembark, advance through the waves, and fight in rough, waist-high water

not by military need, but by his desire for a quick and showy success. Two factors should have restrained him

The tribes of northern Gaul were still in revolt, and the summer of 55 BC was drawing to a close. Both factors represented a serious threat to any cross-Channel expedition. The risk was that it would be cut off if rebels seized its Gallic shore ports or autumn storms made the seaway too dangerous.

Caesar dismissed these objections as trifles. What case does he present in *De Bello Gallico* for attacking Britain so late in the campaigning season? He claims that 'in nearly all the Gallic campaigns', Britain had sent help to his enemies in Gaul. He also writes that even though time was running out for a new campaign that year, it would still be useful to cross to Britain to spy out the people and the territory

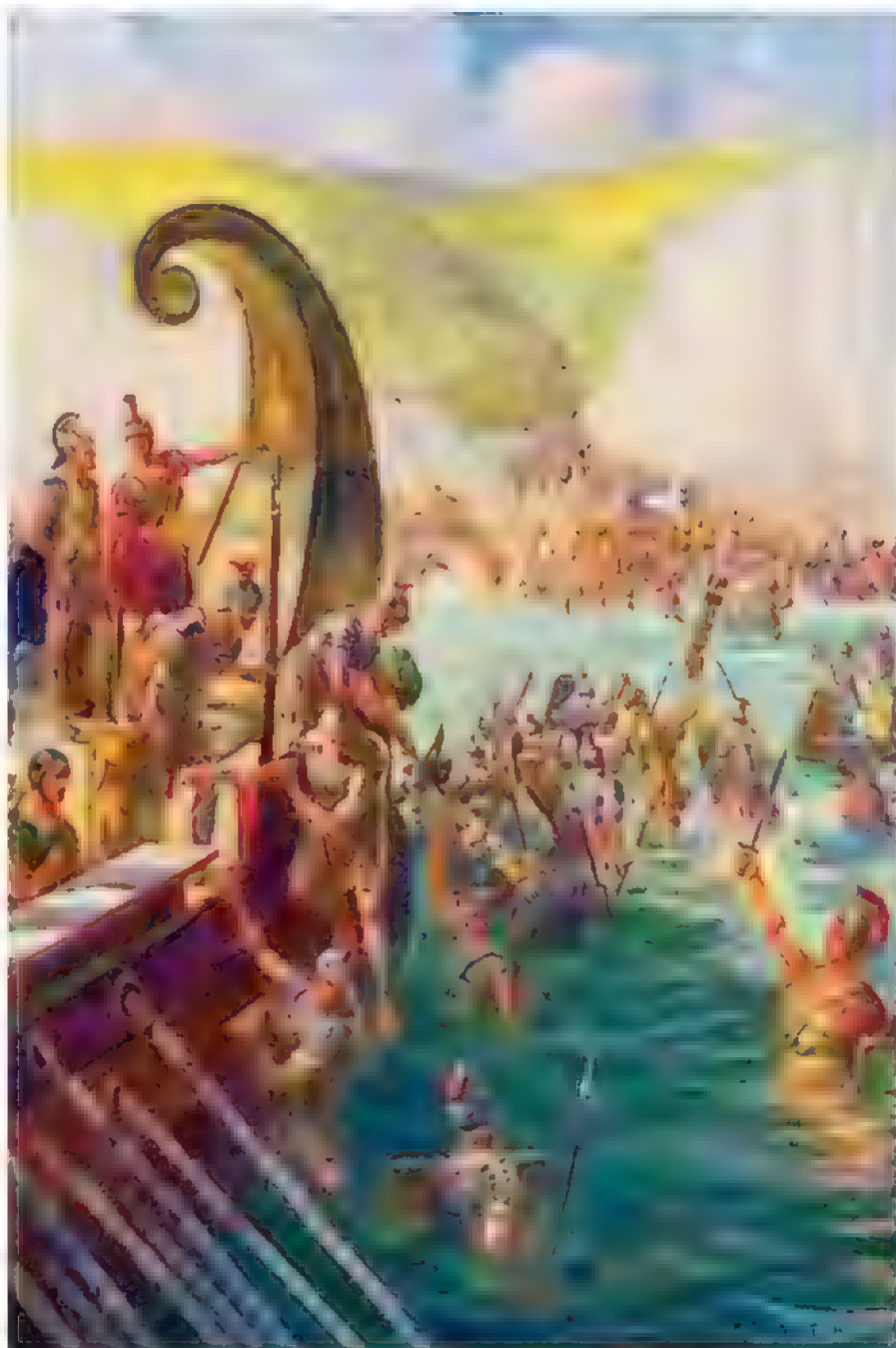
Both arguments seem open to doubt. In *De Bello Gallico*, he only once mentions the possibility that the British might be aiding the Gauls against him. Given this, an intervention across the Channel could hardly have been urgent when Gaul itself was in revolt. Nor does it seem likely that a reconnaissance mission to Britain – one requiring the commander-in-chief's personal attention and the involvement of a large slice of his army – was a higher priority than Gaul itself.

An exotic bauble

Despite what he says, the only plausible explanation for Caesar's decision is that the glory of new conquest was preferred over the tedium of counter insurgency. And it would not be surprising if he had become fixated on Britain.

Not only did the Romans think the island wealthy in slaves, gold, pearls, and tin, but it also had the mystique and challenge of lying on the very edge of their known world. Any general who could even reach Britain with an army would win undying fame. Now that he was within striking distance, it is hardly surprising that Caesar was tempted to risk the security of Gaul for this exotic bauble.

Just as he seems to have deluded himself over the need to attack Britain, so he also seems to have deluded himself over the degree of preparation necessary.▷



The hastiness of his action suggests a greater interest in glory than military requirements.

His first failing was in intelligence. The Romans had little definite knowledge about Britain. Their geographers could not even agree whether it was actually an island, let alone give reliable information about its size, shape, or harbours.

Caesar first attempted to discover these things by questioning Gallic merchants who made regular voyages there. Unsurprisingly, they refused to tell him anything, no doubt unwilling to have their trade disrupted by warfare or usurped by Roman rivals. Not only did they fail to help Caesar; they informed the British chiefs that he was probably preparing an invasion.

Poor preparation and planning

The British tried to forestall the campaign, sending envoys across the Channel offering to submit. Caesar, in a manner that can only suggest he was deceiving himself for the sake of his plan, took this to indicate that the British were well-disposed, and that a visit to the islands would be less, not more risky.

Needless to say, the British envoys did not tell him anything about the geography of the island. He was compelled to send a ship to scout out the Kent coastline. But this was hardly helpful either. Not only did it fail to pick out some of the best anchorages for large vessels – it located Dover, but not the excellent haven at Richborough – but its captain did not dare explore inland. It was poor reconnaissance for the Romans, but a clear warning to the British.

In a hurry to depart, Caesar was also careless with his preparations. He had assembled 80 transport ships at *Portus Itius* (Boulogne). This was just enough to carry two legions. However, they had to be packed in tightly. There would have been up to 150 soldiers in each ship, though these are unlikely to have been much more than 20 metres in length. Heavy equipment had to be left behind. Rations were kept to an absolute minimum, so that the Romans would have to rely on foraging when they arrived. Worse, these vessels were high-sided and would be unsuitable for a beach landing.

In every way, Caesar was leaving himself without room for manoeuvre. If he could disembark without opposition in the harbour at Dover, all would be well. If anything went wrong, his force would be dangerously vulnerable.

Invasion

Caesar embarked his two best legions at Boulogne, the Seventh and the Tenth, late on 24 August 55 BC. However, 18 other vessels, in which he had planned to transport his cavalry, were stuck in a haven six miles up the coast thanks to a contrary wind.

Caesar's haste again led him to take an excessive risk. Rather than ensuring that his whole force sailed together, he went ahead at midnight with the legions, leaving his cavalry under orders to ride down the coast to where their ships were detained and to embark and follow him as soon as possible.

As morning broke on the morning of 25 August, it became clear to Caesar that his gambles were not paying off. The cavalry were nowhere to be seen: the wind was still detaining them. And when the White Cliffs of Dover came into

Caesar's mistakes had led to this débâcle. But he was a good enough commander to be able to save his men from defeat.

Top right The British still used chariots. The Romans associated such weapons with an epic past. Along with the warriors' long hair, blue war-paint, and gold torques, the presence of chariots would have further unnerved Caesar's men.

view ahead, the Roman commander saw a huge host of British warriors ranged along their edge, looking out to sea and awaiting his arrival.

He knew straightaway that his plans were unravelling. There was no way he could bring his large fleet safely into the harbour. The cliffs were so steep and arranged in such a way that the Britons could easily have showered rocks and missiles on the Romans from a great height as they attempted to come ashore.

Caesar realised that his men would have to attempt a beach landing. For this, cavalry would be needed to secure a wide area around any beachhead – but they had still not joined him.

He waited at anchor until three o'clock in the afternoon, and then headed north-east along the coast from Dover, around South Foreland, and then towards the low pebble beach between Walmer and Deal, where the cliffs came down to the shoreline.

Tracking his every move, the British warriors effectively chased the Roman fleet along the coast. Their cavalry and chariots went ahead, and the foot followed close behind. When they realised where Caesar was planning to come ashore, they quickly formed up to oppose him.

The battle on the beach

Everything was now against the Romans. The day had already been long and full of uncertainties, and it was now drawing towards evening. The first close-up sight of the British warriors with their long hair and moustaches, their blue war paint and gold torques, their numerous fighting chariots – which were, by Caesar's time, thought to belong to an epic past – must have unnerved the weary Roman legionaries.

Caesar is candid in *De Bello Gallico* about the difficulties they now faced.

The size of the ships made it impossible to run them aground except in fairly deep water; and the soldiers, unfamiliar with the ground, with their hands full, and weighed down with the heavy burden of their arms, had at the same time to jump down from the ships, get a footing in the waves, and fight the enemy, who, standing on dry land or advancing only a short way into the water, fought with all their limbs unencumbered and on perfectly familiar ground, boldly hurling javelins and galloping their horses, which were trained to this kind of work. These perils frightened our soldiers, who were unaccustomed to battles of this kind, with the result that they did not show the same alacrity and enthusiasm as they usually did in battles on dry land.

Caesar's mistakes had led to this débâcle. But he was a good enough commander to be able to save his men from defeat.

Accompanying the transport ships was a squadron of warships: fast, long, manoeuvrable vessels, perhaps with double ranks of oars. Catapults were mounted on their decks, protected by turrets, and the vessels were filled with auxiliary troops: slingers from the Balearic Isles and archers from Numidia



and Crete. Caesar ordered these ships to operate on the enemy's right flank and bring it under sustained missile-fire

When this attack forced the British to draw back a little, it made room for more of the Romans to jump from the side of their transport ships. They were headed by the standard-bearer of the Tenth Legion, who prayed to the gods and then shouted: 'Jump out, men, if you don't want to betray your standard to the enemy! At least I'm doing my duty to the Republic and my general.'

As the other soldiers, stirred to action by this call, began to leap out in greater numbers, Caesar ordered smaller scouting-vessels, also with the fleet, to rush to the aid of small groups of soldiers who were struggling in the water and unable to get themselves into orderly ranks. In this way, a sufficient body of men was finally able to make it onto the shore, form up, and mount a decisive charge.▷





Left Despite the disastrous first invasion, Caesar was honoured simply for having reached the fabled land of Britain. For his victories, he was voted 15 days of thanksgiving. Here, Gallic chieftain Vercingetorix officially surrenders his sword and himself to Caesar following his last stand at Alesia in 52 BC.

Caesar's poor organisation and intelligence-gathering, marred by haste, led him to the brink of disaster. Problems had been ignored for the whimsy of British conquest.

A doomed mission

Even though his men had scattered the British and secured a camping ground, the consequences of Caesar's over-hasty preparation dogged them. Lack of cavalry was the greatest problem.

They had been unable to pursue the defeated British at the beachhead and turn their first success into a rout. And over the following days, their lack of mobility meant that they could not even carry out the main ostensible purpose of the mission: reconnaissance.

As Caesar had brought only a scanty supply of rations, the soldiers' time was fully taken up with foraging and defending the camp. Without a proper body of cavalry, this was a trying enterprise. After several days out collecting grain, the Seventh Legion fell victim to an ambush, and Caesar was only just able to rush to their aid with reinforcements and save them from annihilation.

Matters were made yet worse by one final piece of carelessness. Caesar left the main body of transport ships at anchor off the beach, rather than hauling them safely onto land. Around

the time of the full moon on 30 August, storms and a high tide combined to smash and wreck a number of vessels.

Caesar had come without the necessary gear to repair his ships, and a fast boat had to be sent to the Continent for tools and materials. The pressure on Caesar's men increased as their time was now split between foraging, defence of the camp, and repairing the ships.

In the event, Caesar was able to repair all but 12 of the transport ships, allowing him capacity for a full evacuation, but he needed to pack his men in even more tightly for the return voyage.

Evacuation

Caesar escaped before the autumn equinox. By breaking a siege at his camp on the Deal shore before departing, he was able to salvage some honour in retreat. Yet, in every way, the expedition had been a mess. Little had been achieved for an excess of risk and effort. His poor organisation and intelligence-gathering, marred by haste, led him to the brink of disaster. His yearning for an iconic achievement had overwhelmed

the patience necessary for sure progress. Problems, such as the secure pacification of north-western Gaul, had been ignored for the whimsy of British conquest.

But there is a final twist – as Caesar is at pains to tell us. Military failure was transformed into political triumph. The mere fact that Caesar had been able to lead Roman legions to the fabled land of Britain caused a huge outpouring of national excitement.

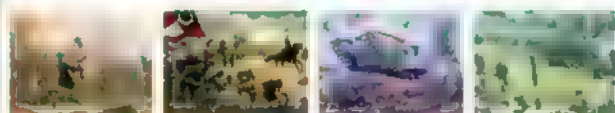
For his initial victories in Gaul, the Senate had voted Caesar 15 days of thanksgiving. But just for reaching Britain and staying there less than a month, with nothing in the way of substantive achievement, he was voted 20 days of thanksgiving.

Even in Roman times, it could be easier for a commander to succeed by simply manipulating the public's obsession with hollow jingoism than by winning a concrete victory. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bijan Omrani teaches Classics at Westminster School. He is the author of *Afghanistan: a companion and guide* and *Asia Overland: tales of travel on the Trans-Siberian and Silk Road*, both published by Odyssey.

Bijan's website is www.bijanomrani.com



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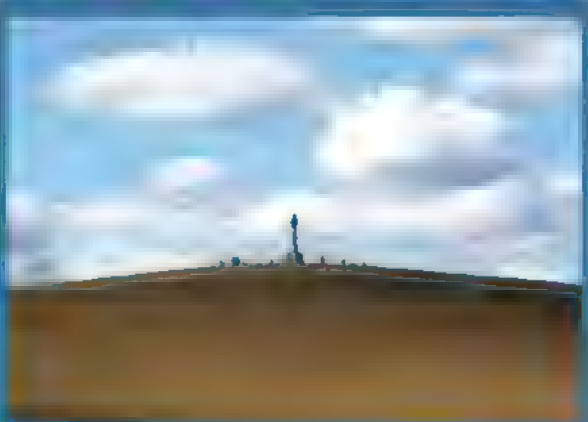
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5-7 APRIL 2013

Based at St Aidan's College at the University of Durham, the 2013 Conference of the Battlefields Trust will be hosted by the Trust's North East and Borders Region. Events will include a field trip to Northumberland to visit the battlefields of Homildon Hill and Flodden (which will be commemorating its 500th anniversary), lectures, walks and talks, a conference dinner, and a number of 'fringe' events before and after the conference.

Their events programme has tried to reconcile the desire to make the most of a visit to the North East with the different budgets and time that members can dedicate to the conference. There will therefore be a core Saturday-Sunday featuring some of the highlights and, for those who would like to make the most of the weekend, a programme of visits on the Friday and Monday.

BATTLE OF BARNET 1471

14 APRIL 2013

Battlefields Trust Chairman Frank Baldwin will lead a walk over the site of this decisive Wars of the Roses battle which witnessed the defeat and death of Warwick, 'the Kingmaker'.

Meet at 11.00am at the Old Monken Public House, High Street, Barnet, EN5 5SU. Nearest tube station: High Barnet.

BATTLE OF UPTON 1651 AND BATTLE OF RIPPLE 1643

27 APRIL 2013

Tony Spicer will be leading two walks over the sites of these little-known but hard fought Civil War actions. Upton was an essential prelude to Cromwell's decisive victory at Worcester. The Battle of Ripple was a dramatic victory by Prince Rupert's brother Prince Maurice over William Waller in 1643. For Upton, meet outside the Heritage Centre in the Pepperpot (an old church tower and well-known landmark in Upton on the west side of the Severn, near the bridge) at 10.45am. For Ripple, meet outside Ripple Parish Hall, School Lane, Ripple, GL20 6EU at 2pm.

SIEGE OF FARINGDON 1645-1646 AND THE BATTLE OF RADCOT BRIDGE 1387

12 MAY 2013

This vital crossing point on the Thames has seen much fighting both during the Middle Ages and during the Civil War. There will be a walk around Folly Hill and Faringdon of two miles followed by a 12 mile drive calling at Radcot, Bampton, and to Newbridge for lunch (optional). Meet at 10.30am. Park in Stanford Road, off London Street between Tuckers Road and Nursery View.

TEL: 01451 833668 OR 07990 571945

THE BATTLEFIELDS TRUST AND THE FUSILIERS MUSEUM

LONDON LECTURE SERIES

THROUGHOUT 2013

Hosted by the Fusiliers Museum London in the Officer's Mess of The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, this lecture series covers everything from the archaeology of the First World War (presented by MHM editor Neil Faulkner), to the military history of the *Magna Carta*. Bookings must be made in advance via the appropriate link on the Battlefields Trust website (www.battlefieldstrust.com)

The Muckleburgh Military Collection Display Weekend

This is your chance to see many of the Collection's tanks and vehicles on the move and an opportunity to drive a tracked vehicle if pre-booked via the website. There will be displays by other military vehicle owners including the RAF and the Army. There are rides around the old Weybourne Anti-Aircraft camp to see the remaining gun pits and bunkers. Shops and stalls will sell military items together with plenty of catering facilities offering much to do. Set in beautiful surroundings with lovely sea views, the weekend gives children and all members of the family an exciting time.

WHEN: 1-2 June 2013

WHERE: Weybourne, Norfolk NR25 7EH

HOW MUCH: £9 per Adult and £7 per Child (under 5's free) per day. Free parking and museum entry

WEB: www.muckleburgh.co.uk



Wallis and Wallis

Britain's specialist auctioneers of arms, armour, medals, and militaria have a series of auctions and sales coming up this year. If you are a collector or dealer, be sure not to miss the following key dates in their calendar. For more information and details of further events, visit the Wallis and Wallis website.

WHEN: March 22

May 4 and 5

March 26 (Spring Connoisseur Collectors Auction)

June 14 (Last entry, May 7)

July 26 (Last entry, June 18)

September 6 (Last entry, July 30)

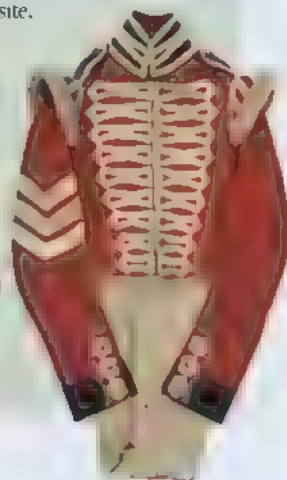
October 18 and 19

September 10 (Autumn Connoisseur Collectors Auction)

November 22 (Last entry, October 22)

WHERE: West Street Auction Galleries, Lewes, Sussex, BN7 2NJ

WEB: www.wallisandwallis.co.uk



A History of the
BRITISH
ARMY
IN 25 BATTLES

AMIENS, 1918



AMIENS, 1918

Amiens represented a rebirth of the British Army. The trench-war stalemate of the previous three years was broken as a new army of conscripts broke the German line with the aid of tanks, airpower, and modern tactics. The war of movement was resumed. Here, in the village of Hourges on 10 August 1918, German prisoners can be seen passing British tanks and infantry on their way forward. Right David Lloyd George (1863-1945), the Minister of Munitions and Prime Minister who did more than anyone else to create the mass national army with which Britain won the First World War.



A History of the
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AMIENS, 1918



AMIENS

8-12 AUGUST 1918

In 1916 the British had lost 400,000 men in 140 days to gain eight miles of ground. Two years later, fighting on the same battlefield, they lost 180,000 men in 50 days and advanced 25 miles. The British Army had been transformed into an effective instrument of modern industrialised warfare.

The official German report would describe what happened on 8 August 1918 as 'the greatest defeat which the German Army had suffered since the beginning of the war'. General Erich Ludendorff – joint supreme commander of the German Army alongside General Paul von Hindenburg – considered it 'the black day of the German Army', signalling beyond doubt 'the decline of our fighting powers'.

Germany never recovered. Its Army fought on for three months more, but it was relentlessly battered and forced back by a succession of British, French, and American offensives striking different sectors of the Western Front, bringing to bear

each time an overwhelming weight of men, machines, and firepower.

When the Armistice was finally signed, revolution had already broken out in the German Fleet and the home cities, and the generals knew that the line at the front was close to breaking. Later claims that an undefeated Army had been 'stabbed in the back' was the self-serving lie of the German Right in the post-war period. The truth was that the German Army had been comprehensively defeated in the field and was, by early November 1918, on the brink of rout.

What was it that had caused this extraordinary turnaround?

Surprise

General Henry Rawlinson (1864-1925) was an archetypal British senior officer

of First World War vintage. A product of Eton, Sandhurst, and the Guards, he had served in India and the Sudan, and had then risen from divisional to corps to army command between August 1914 and January 1916. He had commanded the Fourth Army during the Battle of the Somme, and his class prejudice, military myopia, and lack of imagination were in large part responsible for the stupidity which characterised the British method of attack on 1 July 1916.

Below left Britain's stormtroopers. Dominion soldiers from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada became a kind of military elite in the BEF on the Western Front. Here, Australians prepare to advance during the Hundred Days Offensive.

Below An Australian transport detachment on the Western Front, Amiens sector, autumn 1918, with the men wearing their distinctive slouch hats.

Images: WPA



Right A war of movement. Men in 'blobs' instead of lines. Small units with their own machine-guns and trench mortars. The revolution in infantry tactics is immediately apparent in this photo of a group of Highlanders in position with Lewis light machine-gun at the ready.

Fortunately for the 12 British and Dominion divisions committed to the offensive that began on 8 August 1918, Rawlinson had displayed a belated ability to learn lessons. Among them was the value of surprise – so lacking in the dismal attritional battles of 1916 and 1917, but now restored to its central place in military planning.

Secrecy was the opening theme of Rawlinson's general instructions for the attack. Staff conferences were moved around to avoid alerting the enemy to any particular location. Normal activity was maintained in the Amiens sector. All unusual movement took place at night. Supply dumps were camouflaged against aerial observation, and British planes overflew the sector to check that all appeared normal from the air. Local inhabitants were moved out of the area, soldiers' paybooks were inscribed with the injunction 'Keep Your Mouth Shut', and units designated for the assault were only moved into position the day before zero.

Stormtroopers

The assault, moreover, was to be led by two overseas army corps formed of Australians and Canadians, soldiers whose martial prowess had turned them into the British Army's *corps d'élite*.

Ludendorff had demonstrated the effectiveness of crack units of specially selected and trained 'stormtroopers'

during the German Spring Offensives earlier that year. Their role had been to spearhead the assault, break into the opposing trench system, infiltrate between strongpoints, and thus fragment and disorganise enemy resistance. The Australians and Canadians were now to play a similar role for the British.

There were
only minutes
to go before the
commencement of
one of the greatest
battles of the war.

Captain Henry Smeddle

The white Dominions were, of course, pioneer communities. There was a rugged individualism about life on the Canadian prairies and in the Australian outback, and men recruited from these places tended to be physically tough, independent-minded, and – to the profound irritation of many tradition-minded officers – contemptuous of the

class pretensions of the British elite. Discipline was more lax in Dominion units, and relations between officers and men closer. Australians in particular tended to be scruffy, insubordinate, and unwilling to obey orders they disagreed with. But this was the reverse side of the self-reliance in combat that the modern battlefield required.

The infantry had also been substantially re-equipped. They were now expected to operate in 'blobs' rather ▶



Below The German Spring Offensives of 1918 were spearheaded by specially selected and trained assault units – the 'stormtroopers' – as seen in action here. They represented a revolution in infantry tactics in response to the dominance of firepower on the modern battlefield.



A History of the **BRITISH ARMY** IN 25 BATTLES

AMIENS, 1918

than lines, to move forwards in a series of rushes, to employ fire and movement, to fight their way piecemeal from shell hole to trench and on through the labyrinth of the enemy's defensive landscape. For this they needed fewer rifles and more grenades, light machine-guns, and trench mortars. British infantry battalions had started the war with two heavy machine-guns apiece. Now the heavy machine-guns had been concentrated in brigade-level machine-gun companies, while the individual battalions had been provided with no less than 16 Lewis guns (light machine-guns) each.

Artillery, airpower, and armour

But Amiens was not just an infantry battle. The British Army had become a true combined-arms force. The transformation can be measured by comparing the composition of the BEF in September 1914 with that in July 1918. As the proportion of infantry fell from two-thirds of total manpower to one half, that of artillerymen increased by a third, of engineers by a factor of two, and tank crew, non-existent at the outset, came to account for 1.2% of military personnel.

At zero hour, the German positions were deluged by the fire of 2,000 guns and howitzers, a third of them 'heavies'. Most were allocated to counter-battery work, effectively neutralising the defending artillery

This not only protected the assaulting infantry; it meant that the tanks became unstoppable, since artillery-fire was the only certain way to destroy them; and this in turn meant that the infantry behind would be guaranteed a path deep into the German trench system.

The 63 aircraft available to the British Army on the Western Front in 1914 had swelled to 22,000 by 1918, and 1,900 of the latter were now deployed in support of Rawlinson's attack. Initially used almost exclusively for reconnaissance, aircraft were now multi-purpose, being used also for tactical support of the ground battle with bombs and machine-guns, as well artillery-spotting and communications.

The use of airpower in ground attack was combined with the use of armour to punch holes through enemy defences. Some 340 Mark V heavy tanks were to lead the assault on 8 August. A modified design had increased overall reliability and performance, and measures had also been taken to enhance the trench-crossing capacity of tanks, either by

equipping them with 'cribs' to drop into trenches to create a bridge, or, in the case of the latest models (the Mark V Stars), by building them with 6 feet of extra length.

The assault tanks were supported by 120 supply tanks, and also by 72 of the new 'Whippet'

Left A British tank looms over a German trench. Powerful artillery, aerial ground-attack, and armoured spearheads finally made a reality of the military axiom that 'artillery gains ground and infantry occupies it'.



Above British Mark V tanks – equipped with 'cribs' to facilitate crossing trenches – advance, accompanied by infantry during the Hundred Days Offensive.

For every shell
the enemy sent
over, he received
10 or 20 back.

British signals officer

medium tanks. These weighed only half as much as the heavy tanks and could manage almost twice the speed; as such, they were intended for rapid advance following any breakthrough.

Breakthrough

The British guns opened fire at 4.20am on 8 August, an hour before dawn, delivering a creeping barrage 200 yards in front of the assaulting armour and infantry, with lifts forward 100 yards every two minutes. There was no preliminary bombardment, not even a short 'hurricane' bombardment; surprise was everything, with artillery, armour, and infantry working in close harness throughout.

Participants were struck by this. Captain Henry Smeddle, waiting in the forward zone in command of a section of three Mark V Stars, recalled how 'the silence seemed like that preceding a storm, the occasional crackle of machine-guns in the distance or a far-off boom of heavy artillery being the only sounds that met the ear, yet there were only minutes to go before the commencement of one of the greatest battles of the war.'





Above A German battery of 210mm howitzers prepares to move. By autumn 1918, the Germans were so heavily outgunned on the Western Front that they were forced to keep changing position – often to fall back – or risk obliterating counter-battery fire.

When the barrage began, the effect was shattering – ‘it broke the silence with a terrific crashing roar’ – and no sooner had it done so than the assault formations were lumbering forwards.

The tanks led the way, bumping across no-man’s-land, flattening the wire, scything enemy trenches with machine-gun fire, blasting open his strongpoints with cannon. The infantry followed in the wake of these clanking, roaring, fire-spitting monsters, sweeping across successive enemy lines, Canadians on the right, Australians in the centre, British on the left.

Along the whole 14-mile front, they were successful, smashing a weak defensive line of six under-strength German divisions (averaging barely 3,000 men each) that were inadequately entrenched. The surprise, which was complete, was compounded by the confusion caused by the thick fog that lay across the battlefield early that morning. Such resistance as the Germans mounted was generally that of isolated units. Moreover, reported the Official History, ‘when a machine-gun post gave trouble, the infantry lay down while a tank tackled it; in most cases, the crew surrendered as the machine came near, or fled.’

Soon, the advanced elements had broken into territory where there was

no inkling of their presence. ‘The enemy were evidently quite unaware of the rapidity of our advance,’ reported Captain Smeddle, ‘for just as we were about opposite Harbonnières, we saw an ammunition train steaming into the station as if nothing was the matter. It was immediately shelled by all the 6-pdr guns of the approaching tanks. One shell must have struck a powder van for suddenly the whole train burst into one great sheet of flame, reaching to a height of not less than 150 feet.’

Victory

Almost all the first day’s objectives were reached. They lay some six to eight miles beyond the Allied start-lines. The advance continued on the following three days, and then intermittently over the following six weeks, eventually

carrying the Allies some 25 miles forwards. By the end of the first phase, the British had lost 22,000 men and the French, who were attacking in tandem immediately to the south, 24,000, but the Germans had suffered 75,000 casualties, including 30,000 taken prisoner.

By then, however, the attack was losing momentum and the defence thickening. Many of the tanks had broken down. The attackers had moved far beyond their artillery support. The forward supply dumps were far in the rear. German reserves, on the other hand, were filling out the opposing line, and the weak, disjointed, hastily improvised counter-attacks of the first day were giving way to more coordinated resistance. The offensive was becoming ‘sticky’.

Now another innovation: instead of persisting with an attack that had lost momentum, the offensive was halted for more than a week. Fresh attacks were mounted in other sectors – using the same mix of surprise, combined arms, and modern infantry tactics. Then the centre of military gravity shifted back to Rawlinson’s front and there were renewed pushes in the Amiens sector. And so it continued for three months: this was the nature of the Hundred Days Offensive.

So there was no breakthrough. The state of military technology still precluded this: the weight of defensive firepower and the limits on offensive

mobility meant that tactics had swallowed strategy. The only way to win was through attrition. The Hundred Days comprised a succession of advances in different sectors that crumbled the German line, eroding it materially and morally, until it was stretched to bursting like the over-tensioned skin of a drum. And the cost of this was very high.

Between 21 August and 11 November 1918, the BEF suffered 265,000 casualties. This represents roughly the same rate of average daily loss as on the Somme in 1916 and at Passchendaele in 1917 ▷



Left Eric Kennington’s painting of Canadian Highlanders moving forwards during the Hundred Days Offensive. We seem to see the vigour, confidence, and determination of an advance to victory, yet also the nightmare world of the modern battlefield as the men wade through the shrouds of the dead in a blasted landscape filled with metallic debris.

MIENS, 1918

The fact was that there was no cheap way to win a modern industrialised war against an economic and military superpower like Imperial Germany. In the end, it was not a matter of either technology or tactics; it was a matter of mass. A British signals officer commented in 1918 that 'for every shell the enemy sent over, he received 10 or 20 back'. And the British Army's highest 24-hour expenditure of ammunition in the entire war – a total of 945,000 shells – took place on 28/29 September 1918. The

Haig himself, the overall BEF commander, was more like the

British industry was out of date. It comprised relatively large numbers of medium-sized firms working with antiquated technology and, of course,

THE WESTERN FRONT
 Allied line, Sept., 25, 1918 ———
 Army boundaries..... ———
 Offensives ———→
 Railway - double line ———+——+——
 Railway - single line ———+——+——

Map of the Western Front in September 1918, showing the Allied line, army boundaries, offensives, and railways. The map covers Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, with major cities like Paris, Brussels, and Cologne marked. Key locations include Plumer, Birdwood, Horne, Byng, Rawlinson, Debeney, Mangin, Berthelot, Gouraud, Pershing, and Gérard. The map also shows the Scheldt, Meuse, and Marne rivers, and the Aisne-Marne offensive line.

Right Colin Gill's painting of a camouflaged 9.2-inch howitzer battery in action late in the war. Weight of fire was now decisive. The death-dealing machine reigned supreme. Notice the infantrymen, who seem to have nothing to do. Notice also the fallen Christ, another casualty of the war. The key to Amiens was really the *Entente's* victory in the war of matériel.



The greatest defeat which the German Army has suffered since the beginning of the war.

Official German report

Below British infantry with a ditched tank during the Hundred Days Offensive. New technology (like tanks) and new tactics (like the effective combination of armour and infantry in attack) were important, but ultimately what decided the war was the greater productive power of the British, French, and US economies.



as private capitalist enterprises, competing rather than co-operating. While old heavy industries like shipbuilding were strong, Britain was way behind Germany in new industries like precision machine-tools, light engineering products, electrical goods, and chemicals – all essential in modern arms manufacture.

Free-market ideology was dumped. State intervention became the driver. Lloyd George established government

control over war-related plant, production, and profits. New state factories were set up to manufacture shells, fuses, and explosives. New industries – aircraft, aero-engines, precision instruments – were set up. American machine-tools were imported, and the output of electric power was doubled. Modern assembly-line methods were introduced, and semi-skilled labour was employed *en masse*, including large numbers of women.

Lloyd George was an egotistical, untrustworthy, unprincipled opportunist; in essence he represented nothing but his own ambition and vanity. Because of this, he was tied to no vested interest, and in the circumstances this made him the man of the moment. *Laissez-faire* ideology and the prerogatives of private property were no obstacle to him. And for all his faults, he was brilliant, dynamic, and charismatic, such that, when he set about a task, he was able to sweep forwards, inspiring others to go with him, breaking down whatever barriers of conservatism and lethargy might stand in the way.

His successful stint at munitions paved the way for his elevation to the supreme position in the crisis that engulfed the Asquith government in December 1916. As Prime Minister, he then revolutionised government, creating a 'War Cabinet' of five members, supplemented by others as needed, to run the war. He also created his own unit of official advisors, a civilian equivalent of an army commander's staff, some of whom were lodged in wooden huts in the Downing Street garden, becoming known as 'the Garden suburb'. This, too, was part and parcel of creating a total-war economy. ▶

A History of the **BRITISH ARMY** IN 25 BATTLES

AMIENS, 1918

Mass and firepower

Shell deliveries rose from 5,380,000 between July and December 1915 to 35,407,000 in the second half of 1916. Between 1914 and 1916, trench mortar production increased from 12 to 5,554, machine-gun production from 287 to 33,507, and grenade production from 2,164 to 34,867,966. These are measures of the transformation of the British Army from a regular army designed to fight colonial small-wars into a mass army engaged in a modern war of *materiel* against the armies of other great powers.

This was the context for the introduction of conscription. After the initial surge of volunteer enthusiasm in late 1914, the numbers offering themselves had fallen off sharply. Whereas 761,000 men had joined up in the first eight weeks of the war, the average rate through 1915 was only about a quarter as many. Given the growing demands of essential war industries, the murderous attrition on the Western Front, and the size of deployments elsewhere, Britain was facing an acute military manpower shortage by the winter of 1915/16.

The Military Service Act became law on 27 January 1916. It made all men, single or married, aged 18 to 41, liable for military service, exempting only those who were unfit, proven conscientious objectors, sole supporters of dependants, and men engaged in essential war work.

Thus was Britain's 'fourth' First World War army created. The Regulars had dominated the battles of 1914, the Territorials the offensives of 1915, the Kitchener 'New Army' Volunteers the Battle of the Somme in 1916; now it was the turn of the Conscripts.

These, however, were not formed into new units as their predecessors had been. Instead, they were drafted into existing units as replacements according to need: a far better policy, for it allowed experienced men to act as mentors to green troops, and ensured against disasters like the First Day of the Somme.

It meant, though, that the British Army increasingly lost its county and regional

character, becoming for the first time in its history a truly 'nationalised' force, with men from all corners of Britain serving together in the same units. By the summer of 1917, for example, the 16th Highland Light Infantry, a Glasgow regiment, contained men from Nottingham, Derbyshire, and Yorkshire. By 1918, the 1/6th Cheshires included only 20% of men from its traditional Stockport recruiting ground, and barely half from the county as a whole.

Blockade

Because the veterans had been ground down by four years of trench warfare and the replacements were now usually men who had refused to serve until forced, the British Tommies generally lacked the panache and aggression of the Dominion men and the Americans during the Hundred Days campaigns. Like the French *poilus*, who had munned in spring 1917, many British soldiers had had enough.

But the Germans had been ground down even further. The men of the BEF were now more numerous, better fed, better armed, and better supplied with munitions than their enemy counterparts. That this was so was in large part due to the defeat of

the German U-boat campaign in the Battle of the Atlantic in 1917 – which saved Britain from starvation – and the effectiveness of the Royal Navy blockade of German commerce – which created famine conditions in Germany.

An estimated 750,000 German civilians died of hunger before the war ended. When Ludendorff's men, during the Spring Offensives on the Western Front in 1918, broke into the British rear areas, they had rapidly lost discipline as they dispersed to plunder the bounteous supplies of food and drink they found there. When the British Army took 200,000 prisoners during the Hundred Days, many were motivated to give up by simple privation.

Thus did the BEF spearhead the offensive which finally broke the military resistance of Imperial Germany, defeating 99 of the 197 enemy divisions on the Western Front, and winning what Marshal Foch, the Allied commander-in-chief, regarded as the greatest military victory in the British Army's history. ■

Below A few manage smiles for the camera, but by September 1918, when this photo was taken, German soldiers were starving, in retreat, and deeply demoralised.



COMING NEXT

DUNKIRK

28 MAY-4 JUNE 1940

Lessons learned at the end of the First World War were soon forgotten. The prophets of the new way of war were ignored in the interwar period. When war broke out again in 1939, the Blimps were back in control. Outgeneralled and outfought, the British Army crashed to defeat before the German *Blitzkrieg* in May 1940. But the BEF was rescued, and the British people cheered their defeated soldiers, made them cups of tea, and began to prepare for the long, hard, bitter struggle to come.

The Military History Monthly History of the British Army in 25 Battles is being run in collaboration with the National Army Museum. Our special thanks are due to Alastair Massie, Head of Archives, Photographs, Film, and Sound.

A History of the
**BRITISH
ARMY**
IN 25 BATTLES

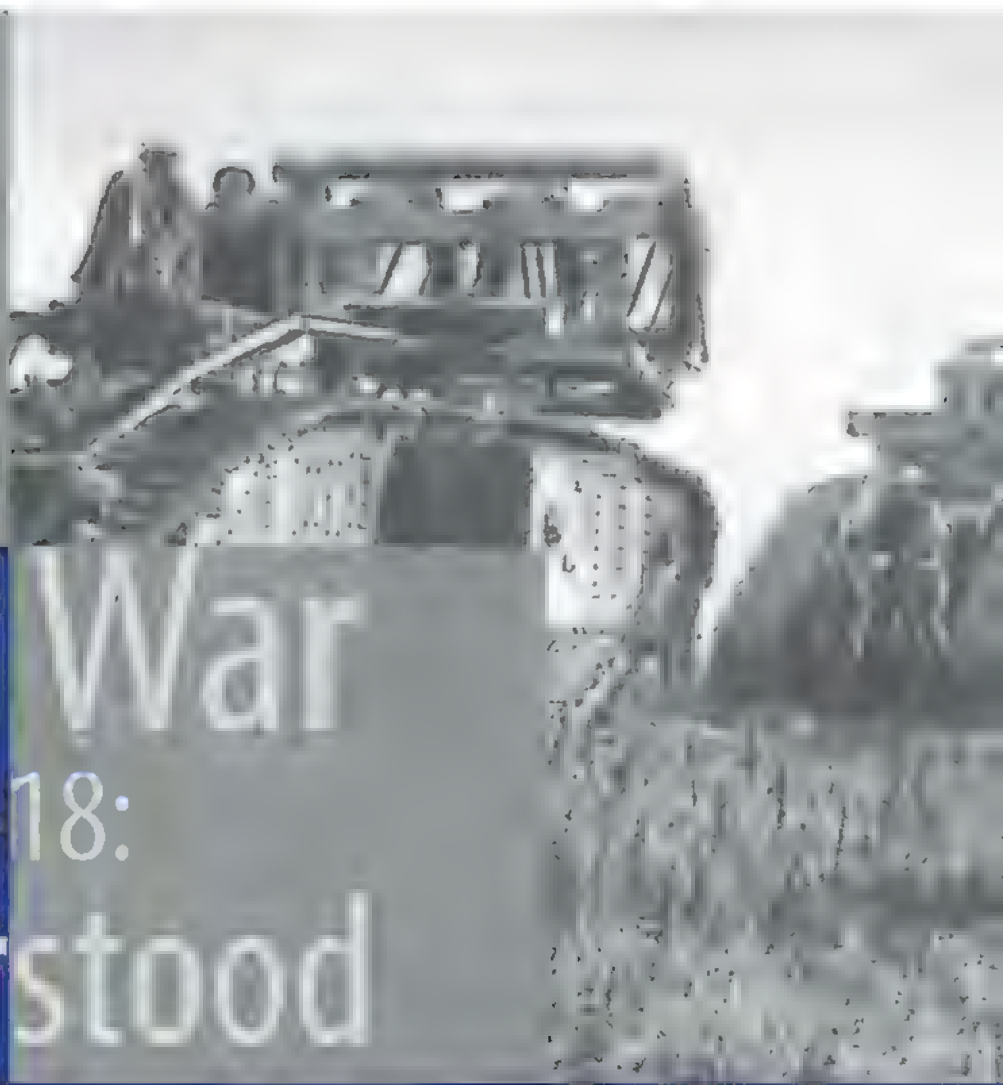
■ DUNKIRK, 1940 ■



THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

founded 1980

the Great War 1914-18: understood



The Battle of Amiens was not just another grinding battle of mud and trenches, as portrayed in the common mythology of the Great War. By August 1918 the British Army had become a formidable 'all arms' fighting force. The Battle of Amiens paved the way to the ultimate defeat of the formidable German Army in the field.

The Great War is a fascinating subject, with a complex blend of military, social, science, political and economic history. To understand much more about the 1914-18 period, and to appreciate the context in which the Battle of Amiens was fought, join us at The Western Front Association.

The Western Front Association
Understanding the Great War 1914-18: explore, explain, enjoy!
www.westernfrontassociation.com
The Western Front Association is a registered charity no 298365





IN WHICH WE SERVE

Launching a new occasional series, TV documentary producer and military historian Taylor Downing explores the story behind the classic wartime movie.

On 20 May 1941, 16,000 German airborne troops launched the invasion of Crete, Hitler's final operation to reverse the disaster of Mussolini's attempt to occupy Greece on behalf of the Axis powers. On the following day, HMS *Kelly* was ordered from Malta to Crete, as leader of a flotilla of three K Class destroyers, to defend the island from the invasion fleet.

Early on the morning of 23 May, the flotilla was attacked by 24 Stuka dive-bombers. The ships in the flotilla took evasive action and the destroyers were sailing at full speed, about 30 knots, when both *Kelly* and her sister-ship, HMS *Kashmir*, were hit.

HMS *Kelly* was struck by a large bomb, listed to port and capsized. The third destroyer in the flotilla, HMS *Kipling*, managed to pick up survivors despite coming under sustained attack herself. HMS *Kelly*'s 159 survivors were rescued and taken to Alexandria.

The captain of HMS *Kelly* and the leader of the flotilla was Lord Louis Mountbatten, the king's cousin. Mountbatten was only in his early 40s but was tall, striking, and had a natural aura of leadership and

authority. Despite this, he had not enjoyed a distinguished record as captain of HMS *Kelly*, the ship having been put out of action by mines and torpedoes three times during the war, and having in one

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Lord Louis Mountbatten was born in 1900, the grandson of Grand Duke Louis IV of Hesse and the great grandson of Queen Victoria. His father, Prince Louis of Battenberg, spent his working life in the Royal Navy and rose to be a highly successful and progressive First Sea Lord of the Admiralty before the First World War. In October 1914 he resigned in the wave of anti-German hysteria because of his German background. In 1917 the royal family changed their name from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor, to make the family appear more British. At the same time, Prince Louis changed his family name from Battenberg to Mountbatten. Henceforth, Lord Louis would be a Mountbatten.

14-month period spent only two weeks on active duty. Without doubt, however, Mountbatten was a popular captain, much liked by the men who served under him.

MOUNTBATTEN AND COWARD

Mountbatten returned to London in June 1941, where he met an old showbiz friend for lunch: Noël Coward. Mountbatten had enjoyed an interest in stage and screen throughout his life. On his honeymoon in 1922, he had visited Hollywood and appeared in a short film made by Charlie Chaplin.

Coward was gripped by Mountbatten's account of his recent experiences on HMS *Kelly*, and was particularly fascinated by the speeches he had made as captain to his crew. Coward was a prolific playwright, song composer, and the leading theatre showman of the day. Most of his plays, including *Hay Fever* (1925), *Private Lives* (1930), and *Blithe Spirit* (1941), were satires on the high society circles within which he moved.

Coward had visited Mountbatten on many occasions in the 1930s when the latter was serving in the Mediterranean Fleet, and had grown to admire both Mountbatten and the Royal Navy. 'To start with,' he later said in typical style, 'they've got the best manners in the world, and I love the sea and Navy discipline.'

In the early part of the war, Coward had worked in the British propaganda office in Paris, and after the fall of France he had travelled in the United States. Although he continued to work covertly for British intelligence, he was criticised in the press for swanning around abroad while his fellow citizens faced the Blitz and the threat of invasion at home. He was coming under increasing pressure to do more for the war effort when a film company, Two Cities, approached him and said they would back any film he wished to make. So he decided to make a film based on the story of Mountbatten and the HMS *Kelly* incident. He would write it, produce it, compose the music for it – and star in it as the captain of the ship.

WINNING THE NAVY ROUND

To make a film based on the HMS *Kelly* story would require the support of the Admiralty. And here there was a problem. The Royal Navy was not keen to see the making of a popular film that centred on the sinking of one of its warships. The Ministry of Information further argued that it would be disastrous if the film was ever shown abroad, as it would undermine confidence in the Navy.

Mountbatten felt the extras did not look sufficiently seaman-like. So he arranged for 200 convalescent sailors to appear in the film.

Mountbatten had a more sophisticated view on the role of film and could see how Coward's approach would be good propaganda for the Navy, and a major morale booster at a bad time in the war. He launched a charm offensive. He introduced Noël Coward to Sir Dudley Pound, the First Sea Lord, and to Brendan Bracken, the Minister of Information. Under pressure from Mountbatten and Coward, the authorities came around.

Coward began production on his new film in early 1942. By this time Churchill had made Mountbatten head of Combined Operations – a considerable promotion. Despite the immense pressure of his workload, Mountbatten somehow found time to be closely involved with the production of Coward's film.



CONCOCTING STORIES

Coward's initial scenario had an aristocratic Captain Kinross married to a Lady Kinross, living in a large country house, and being driven around in a Rolls-Royce. (Mountbatten, married to Lady Edwina, owned the Broadlands Estate in Hampshire, and had a Rolls-Royce.) Mountbatten was embarrassed by the similarities and persuaded Coward to tone this down, turning the country house into a more modest villa, the wife into Mrs Kinross and the Rolls into a Ford.

Coward also created several other leading figures, so that the film was not just about

the captain. These included a Chief Petty Officer, played by Bernard Miles, and an Ordinary Seaman, played by John Mills. The stories of these three men – and their wives and families left behind at home – were at the heart of the film.

During the early months of 1942, Mountbatten continued to have a close involvement with the production of *In Which We Serve*. He advised on the casting. He made several visits to Denham Studios, where the film was being shot. He even arranged for the King and Queen to make a rare visit to the studios to see the shooting.

At one point he felt that the extras did not look sufficiently seaman-like in appearance. So he arranged for 200 convalescent seamen from the naval hospital at Haslar to be sent to Denham for a week to appear in the film in order to give a more authentic feel to the scenes of life at sea.

The film begins with the words 'This is the story of a ship'. There follow documentary-like scenes of a destroyer under construction and going through its sea trials. Then the film flashes forward to 23 May 1941 and actions off Crete.

The ship is hit during an air attack, and as it goes down the captain gives the order to 'Abandon ship'. The main part of the film then features a group of survivors clinging to a Carley Float.

We get the stories of the three central characters in a series of flashbacks. We find out more about their wives and families at home, and a picture is painted of a quaint hierarchy of classes, united through a devotion to duty and values of loyalty and dependability. In Coward's film, the ship's crew and their families become >

COMBINED OPERATIONS

In October 1941, Churchill appointed Mountbatten to take over the running of Combined Operations from Sir Roger Keyes, who had not been a success. The job required diplomacy, tact, and vision. Keyes had rubbed everyone up the wrong way, especially the Chiefs of Staff, whom he publicly denounced as being lily-livered.

By contrast, Mountbatten had all the qualities that were needed. In addition, he was supremely confident, dynamic, and superbly well-connected. With typical bulldog spirit, Churchill told Mountbatten to transform the south coast of England 'from a bastion of defence into a springboard for attack'.

Mountbatten brought in a brilliant set of scientific advisers and a new clutch of bright young officers to plan operations. At a bad time in the war for Britain, Mountbatten had the much-needed ability to create heroes. Successful ops during his 'watch' included the commando raid at Vaagsbø in northern Norway in December 1941, the Bruneval Raid by newly formed parachute troops, led by Major John Frost, in February 1942; and the St Nazaire Raid in March of that year – an operation of mixed success but one that resulted in five VCs being awarded.

In addition to these small-scale raids that captured the public's imagination, Combined Operations set about initial planning for Sledgehammer, the operation that would become the invasion of Europe two years later. Churchill was delighted with Mountbatten's successes and in March 1942 promoted him again. Mountbatten wrote proudly to a friend that he was now 'the youngest Vice-Admiral since Nelson'. It was a dazzling success for both Mountbatten and Combined Operations.



DAVID LEAN

At the time, the publicity for *In Which We Serve* claimed that Noël Coward had directed the film, though there is a co-director credit for David Lean. In fact, it is now universally accepted that Coward left Lean to direct most of the scenes while he concentrated on directing the actors and in playing Captain Kinross.

David Lean had started his film career in the late 1920s as a clapper boy, and went on to become a successful film editor. *In Which We Serve* marks his directorial debut. He would go on to become one of the greatest directors in the history of British cinema.

He collaborated again with Coward on *This Happy Breed* in 1944 and the film version of *Blithe Spirit* in 1945. His later films include classics like *Brief Encounter* (1945), *Great Expectations* (1946), and *Oliver Twist* (1948). He won his first Oscar for *Bridge on the River Kwai* in 1957, and later made *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) and *A Passage to India* (1984).

But his greatest film was, of course, *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), for which he won another Oscar, and which has been digitally restored. The stunning new version has just been re-released by Sony-Columbia Pictures to mark the film's 50th anniversary.

Above Stills from Noël Coward's classic wartime movie, starring Coward himself, John Mills, and Bernard Miles. It also features the first screen appearance of Richard Attenborough.

a microcosm of British society, with all its clearly differentiated classes represented.

FACT AND FICTION

There are many elements of *In Which We Serve* that are historically accurate. Coward had been much taken by Mountbatten's speech to his crew when HMS *Kelly* was first commissioned. He reproduced it word for word in the film: 'In my experience, you cannot have an efficient ship unless you have a happy ship, and you cannot have a happy ship unless you have an efficient ship... and that is the way I intend to go on — with a happy and an efficient ship.'

In some ways, however, *In Which We Serve* diverged from the facts. The ship had the invented name of HMS *Torun*. In one sequence, the ship helps with the evacuation of soldiers from Dunkirk. HMS *Kelly* did not take part in this evacuation,

but for contemporary cinema audiences the inclusion of such scenes would have had considerable resonance.

In one scene, in which *Kelly* attacks a group of German warships and is hit in the return fire, a cowardly stoker leaves his post. This was based on a real incident in December 1939 on HMS *Kelly*. When the ship had been towed back to port, Mountbatten called the entire crew together and made a speech that Coward delivers almost verbatim in the film.

He began: 'Out of 240 men on this ship, 239 behaved as they ought to have and as I expected them to. One did not.' Mountbatten pointed out that the penalty for desertion was death. He went on: 'You will therefore be surprised to know that I propose to let this man off with a caution, one caution to him and a second one to myself, for having failed to impress my personality and doctrine on each and all of you to prevent such an incident occurring.'

It is a powerful scene, depicting excellent skills of man-management. Richard Attenborough, then only 18 years old



Left The special edition DVD of the film.

Below HMS *Kelly*, where the film's action takes place.





and appearing in his first screen role, played the sailor who left his post. The scene launched a new film career.

GENERAL RELEASE

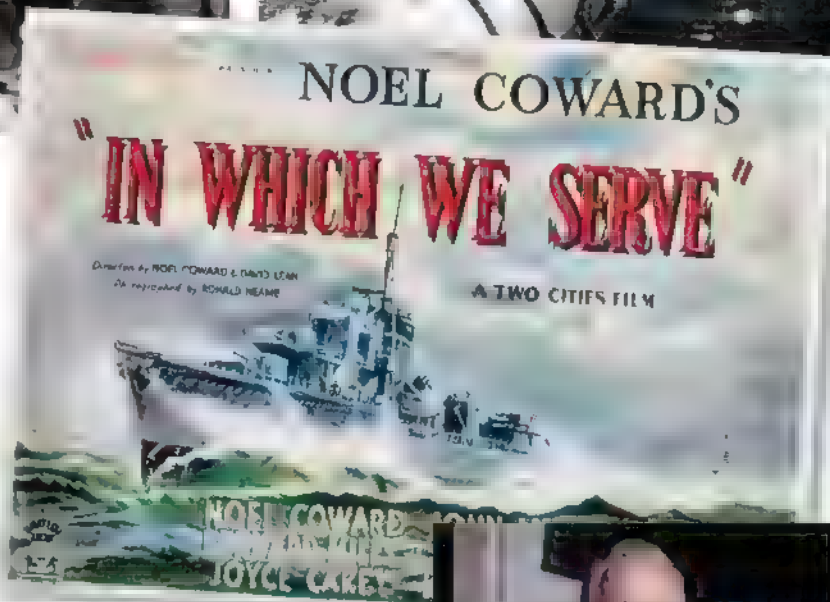
In Which We Serve was released in late 1942 and became an instant hit. For several months it was the highest grossing movie at the box office in Britain. But it also did extremely well in the United States. In 1943 Noël Coward was awarded an Honorary Oscar for the film, and the National Board of Review in America gave it their Best Film Award.

Although the film begins with a disclaimer that it is not based on the story of any particular ship, most people knew that it was about Mountbatten. He later said that his fellow officers ribbed him for helping to make a film that was intended to boost him personally. But Mountbatten soon got over this. He saw the film on many occasions, and apparently, when it was shown to Mrs Roosevelt in the cinema at Buckingham Palace, he kept up a running commentary on the experiences that had served as its basis.

Certainly the film did his career no harm. In 1944 he was appointed Supreme Commander of South-East Asia Command, and in 1947 he became the last Viceroy of India, overseeing the end of the British Raj and the painful birth of India and Pakistan.

A STORY OF BRITAIN AT WAR

The fact that *In Which We Serve* did so well internationally reveals how wrong the men from the Ministry of Information had been in their initial assessment. The film shows the fighting men of the Navy carrying on regardless of what the enemy throws at them. At the end, the film concludes: 'Here



Above A contemporary poster for the film.
Right Lord Mountbatten, whose experiences aboard HMS *Kelly* inspired the film.

ends the story of a ship. But there will be other ships.' In the last shot, we see Captain Kinross, now commanding a new ship, shouting the order 'Open fire!'

The film remains a classic of the British cinema industry, and to today's viewers it captures that quiet-spoken, restrained world in which everyone knew their place and was devoted to the greater good. One of the great successes of *In Which We Serve* is that it is not just the story of a ship at war: it is the story of Britain, as a whole at war.



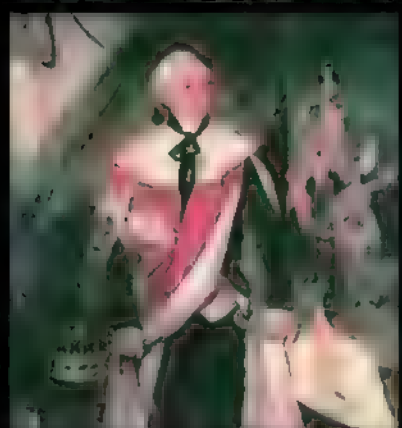
IN WHICH WE SERVE

A Two Cities Film written and produced by Noël Coward, directed by Noël Coward and David Lean, with photography by Ronald Neame. Featuring Noël Coward as Captain Kinross, and Celia Johnson as Mrs Kinross; Bernard Miles as Chief Petty Officer Walter Hardy, and Joyce Carey as Mrs Hardy; John Mills as Able Seaman 'Shorty' Blake, and Kay Walsh as Freda; and Richard Attenborough as the Young Stoker. The film is available through ITV DVD.

1811

THE BRITISH INVASION OF JAVA

On one side of the world, Napoleon was about to invade Russia. On the other, the British were invading Java. **Tim Hannigan** recalls a forgotten imperial adventure.



The column of soldiers moved silently through the forest, picking their way along muddy trails between dense stands of betel-nut trees. Already the thick tropical heat was rising, and their red jackets were sodden with sweat.

It was an hour before dawn on 26 August 1811, and the men – British redcoats and Indian sepoys – were heading for the formidable fastness of Meester Cornelis, the great redoubt of Batavia, grand old capital of the Dutch East Indies. Inside the fortifications was a massed force of Dutch, French, and Javanese troops. In the words of one British participant, the ‘day that was to fix the destiny of Java’ had arrived.

The prize

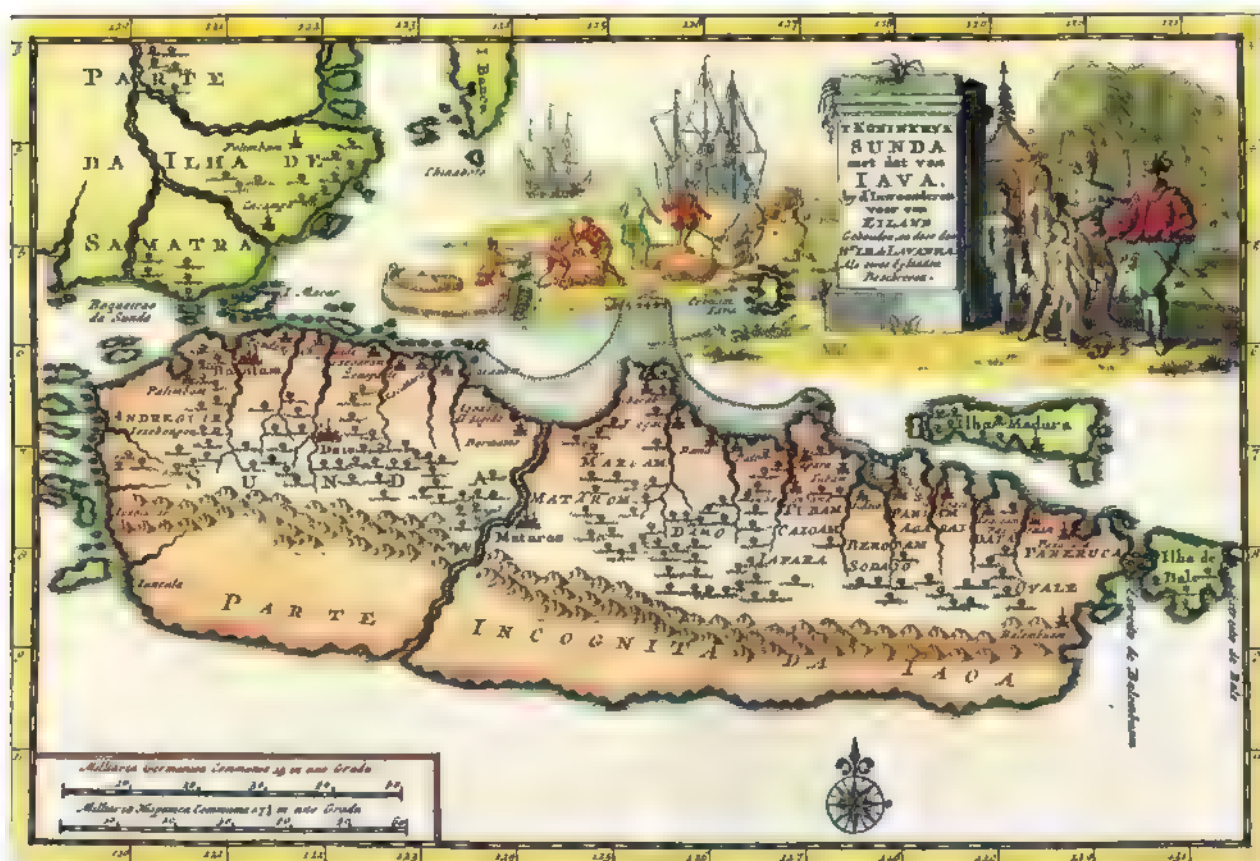
Today’s Indonesia – the former Dutch East Indies – lies largely beyond the horizon of the English-speaking imagination. But in the second decade of the 19th century it was the scene of a dramatic episode of British colonial history.

The five-year British interregnum in Java, which began with the battle for

Batavia in August 1811, was a period of furious controversy that would have a lasting impact on Indonesian history. It also marked a significant chapter in the life of the man best known today for the founding of Singapore: Thomas Stamford Raffles.

Holland, in the form of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), the Dutch East India Company, had been involved in Indonesia for more than two centuries. The company had established Java, the 600-mile long lodestone of the Indonesian archipelago, as the hub of its nascent empire, naming Batavia on the north coast of the island as capital, and setting up a network of outposts across the region.

Main image Batavia as it was at the time of the British invasion. **Above left** One of the Indian sepoys who took part in the Batavia campaign and the later assault on Yogyakarta. **Middle** Thomas Stamford Raffles, lieutenant-governor of Java during the British interregnum and subsequent founder of Singapore. **Bottom** Lord Minto, governor general of the British East India Company’s Asian possessions, who disobeyed official orders and established a British administration in Java after the fall of Batavia.



Britain, meanwhile, was increasingly entrenched in the Indian Subcontinent, and had little interest in South-East Asia. But war in Europe changed all that.

In the winter of 1794, Napoleon invaded Holland and installed a puppet republican regime. For the British authorities, all Dutch overseas territories became *de facto* enemy territory – though pressing concerns closer to home meant that it was not until 1810 that the British East India Company's governor-general in Calcutta, Gilbert Elliot, Lord Minto, received instructions to 'proceed to the conquest of Java at the earliest possible opportunity'. The following year a fleet of 81 troop-ships departed India on course for Batavia.

Minto and Raffles

The advance on Java had the air of a Sunday outing. Lord Minto – a dandyish 60-year-old civilian – had taken a personal interest in the project, and together with his collaborator, the 30-year-old Thomas Stamford Raffles, a former clerk in the administration of Penang, he had

The Dutch hoped the British would rapidly succumb to malaria in the pestilential alleyways of the old city.

Above An early Dutch map of Java.

developed a wildly Romantic view of Java as 'the land of promise'.

Regimental wives and civilian hangers-on had tagged along for the adventure, and as the fleet lumbered across the Java Sea, they were entertained by the antics of strapping young sailors dressed as 'young, accomplished, and generally sentimental ladies of quality'.

On 4 August the fleet dropped anchor in the murky waters of Batavia Bay, and the 12,000-strong invasion force was landed at the undefended fishing village of Cilincing, eight miles east of Batavia. The forces were evenly split between British regiments and units from the Bengal Presidency Army.

Batavia's climate was notoriously unhealthy, and it was hoped the Indians would fare better than Englishmen; in the event, they began to succumb to fever before the first shot was fired.

The commander-in-chief was the New York-born veteran Lieutenant-General Sir Samuel Auchmuty, and the commander of the forces in the field was the feisty 45-year-old Irishman Colonel Roelo Gillespie.

The Dutch settlement of Batavia formed a linear development, running inland from the mouth of the Ciliwung River, eight miles west of the British landing spot. First came the walled city of Old Batavia, built in the early 17th century; three miles inland was the modern garrison of Weitevreeden; and a further three miles towards the mountains stood the fortress of Meester Cornelis. ▶



Above Clincing, site of the British landing in August 1811. **Left** A view of Batavia from the north in the late 18th century. Weltevreden and Cornelis lay inland towards the mountains. **Below** Batavia in the late 18th century.

Auchmuty and Gillespie had expected first to engage enemy forces in Old Batavia, but when they reached the city – the eight-mile advance took several days, so intersected with canals and fishponds was the country – they found that the Dutch had already abandoned it,

Dutch plays

The Dutch-Napoleonic army in Batavia amounted to a mixed force of some 18,000 men. At their head was the governor-general Jan Willem Janssens, a committed Dutch republican who wrote his letters in florid French. He had already presided over one notable defeat at the hands of the British at the Battle of Blaauwberg in South Africa in 1806, and it was said that Napoleon had despatched him to Java with an ominous warning: 'Know, sir, that a French General is not offered a second chance.'

Janssens had abandoned Old Batavia as a deliberate ploy, hoping that the British would rapidly succumb to the malaria

The ground was strewn with the mangled bodies and scattered limbs of friends and foes, blended together in a horrible state of fraternity.

endemic there, and could then be pinned down in the pestilential alleyways. As an imaginative additional measure, he had ordered that copious quantities of alcohol should be left in the abandoned houses, in the hope that the British would drink themselves into a stupor.

Gillespie issued strict orders for sobriety. A tentative Dutch assault on the southern gates of the walled town was seen off. And the best efforts of a requisitioned French servant to fell the top brass with a batch of poisoned

coffee had only limited results. Then, before dawn on 10 August, a 1,500-strong British force moved south along the road to Weltevreden. But once more, the British found that Janssens had already pulled back his forces.

An elusive foe

Some of the British began to wonder if they would ever get the chance to fight in Java. But as they pressed on, now heading northwards through a dense stand of pepper trees they finally came under sustained fire for the first time. The Dutch had set up field guns on either side of the road, and had felled trees to block the way.

Gillespie, who was still vomiting from time to time as a result of the poisoned coffee, ordered two parties to loop out left and right to attack the enemy positions from the flank, while a third party scrambled forward under covering fire to haul the trees out of the way.

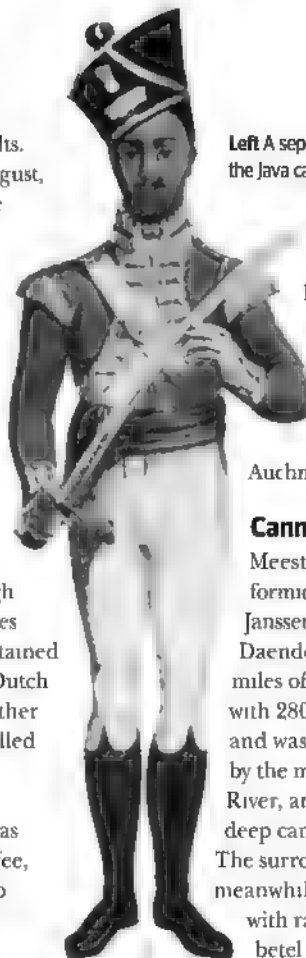
It was all over in minutes, and the Dutch forces were soon fleeing through the forest towards Meester Cornelis, despite the best efforts of their officers to rally them.

At one point, Janssens' chief of staff, General Alberti, who had become separated from his own men, ran into a small party of the green-coated British 89th. Mistaking them for his own troops, Alberti began upbraiding them angrily for retreating without orders – at which point a private of the 89th shot him in the chest (though he ultimately survived).

The problem that Janssens faced was not one of numbers; it was a question of loyalty and quality. Many of the Dutchmen were aging veterans of the former VOC army – the VOC itself having been disbanded shortly after the French invasion of Holland – and they had little, if any, commitment to the Napoleonic cause. The Javanese conscripts had still less interest in fighting.

A number of French soldiers had been shipped out in recent years, but

Left A sepoy NCO who took part in the Java campaign.



they were reportedly the dregs of the Republican army, deemed of little use on European fronts. Now they bolted for the final fastness of Meester Cornelis, where Gillespie and Auchmuty set up a siege.

Cannonade

Meester Cornelis was a formidable fortress. Built by Janssens' predecessor, Marshal Daendels, it comprised five miles of fortifications studded with 280 pieces of heavy cannon, and was flanked to the west by the meandering Cihung River, and to the east by a deep canal called the Slokan. The surrounding countryside, meanwhile, was 'intersected with ravines, enclosures, and betel plantations, resembling hop-grounds, many parts of which could only be passed in single file'.

Over the coming days the British kept up a heavy cannonade against the northern walls of Cornelis. Gillespie and Auchmuty were sensitive to the dangers of a stalemate in the morbid Javanese climate. They had arrived with the advantage of energy and health, but by mid-August heat and fever were taking their toll, and they knew they must act. And so, in the early hours of the morning of 26 August, the final stealthy assault began.

Small parties were sent out to attack the fortress from all angles, while the bulk of the British forces under Gillespie headed off through the forest to launch a surprise assault across the Slokan from the east, the point they had judged the weakest. The plan was to launch simultaneous operations at first light.

In the event Gillespie almost met with disaster. As the first section of the advance huddled in the trees just a few hundred yards from the first Dutch pickets, they realised to their horror that the thousands-strong column that should have been snaking up behind them was nowhere to be seen: they had got lost in the betel plantations.

It was, in the words of Captain William Thorn, a close confidant of Gillespie, 'One of those pauses of distressful >



Left A private and an officer of the 14th Regiment of Foot, which also fought in the Java campaigns.



Above Meester Cornelis, the great Dutch fastness in Batavia, showing the British deployed for the assault. **Right** The upland garrison of Salatiga in central Java, where Janssens finally capitulated and handed Java over to the British.

anxiety, which can be better conceived than described.'

Unable to communicate with the other parties, Gillespie decided on a typically brazen course of action: he attacked anyway, sneaking unspotted past the first Dutch sentries, and then launching an unsupported rush on the first redoubts.

An almighty explosion

As the sun slipped up over the lush green Javanese countryside, the battle for Meester Cornelis got under way. Gillespie and his men forced their way across the Slokan and overwhelmed Redoubt Number Four in a welter of close combat.

Eventually the missing columns appeared from the forest and joined an attack on the next redoubt. But on the brink of storming it, the British were subjected to an almighty explosion. A pair of French captains, in an early instance of a suicide bombing, had immolated themselves in the powder store – with dramatic consequences, as Captain Thorn recorded: 'The ground was strewn with the mangled bodies and scattered limbs of friends and foes, blended together in a horrible state of fraternity.'



Despite this shocking incident, Gillespie's men pushed on, deeper into the Cornelis fortifications. More redoubts fell. Guns were seized. An attempted Dutch cavalry charge from the bowels of the fort faltered fast under fire.

Very soon the assault had triggered a rout, and the defenders were fleeing south through the forest, heading for the Dutch hill-station of Buitenzorg, with the British in furious pursuit. By the time they had gone ten miles, the British had taken 5,000 prisoners.

Once more, it was shaky loyalties that had caused Janssens' defence to collapse. One appalled Napoleonic officer

recorded the scene as he was dragged back towards British lines: 'With a feeling of shame and indignation I saw more than one [Dutch] officer amongst them trample on his French cockade, to which he had sworn allegiance, uttering scandalous imprecations and swearing and assuring the English: "I am no Frenchman, but a Dutchman."'

Lord Minto, who had been safely ensconced offshore during the worst of the fighting, visited the battlefield the following day, and was horrified: 'The number of dead and the shocking variety of deaths had better not be imagined.' But in truth the outgunned

British had achieved victory at minimal cost. Just 62 British soldiers and 17 Indian sepoy had died in the attack on Meester Cornelis.

Janssens and a small body of Napoleonic officers had escaped and fled east to Semarang, where they attempted to organise a second line of defence. Auchmuty set out in pursuit.

Eventually, on 18 September, at the little upland garrison of Salatiga, Janssens – who was almost alone by the end – ceded control of the Dutch East Indies to the British. He stressed, however, that 'as long as I had any [men] left me, I would never have submitted'.

The British interregnum

The five-year interregnum that followed the fall of Batavia was, in truth, a rogue operation. Lord Minto's instructions from the Supreme Government had ordered him to organise only 'the

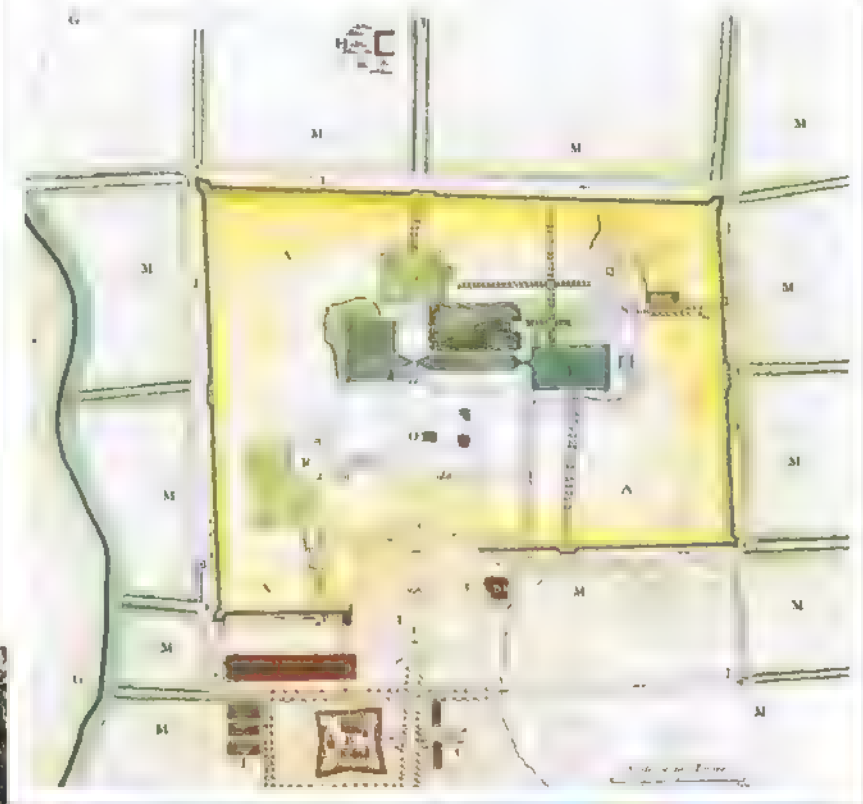
expulsion of the Dutch power, the destruction of their fortifications, the distribution of their arms and stores to the natives, and the evacuation of the Island by our own troops'.

But with his Romantic notions of 'the land of promise', as well as supposed concern for the fate of Dutch civilians, he unilaterally decided to retain the territory. He and Auchmuty returned to India in October 1811, leaving the inexperienced

Raffles as lieutenant-governor, with Gillespie as his military counterpart.

Today Raffles is best remembered for the subsequent founding of Singapore, and is usually portrayed as a liberal reformer, a gentleman scholar, and an acceptable counterpoint to the more aggressive aspects of British colonial history. His actions in Java, however, reveal him to have been a personification of the shift from the

Inset The Yogyakarta Kraton, the fortified royal city that the British sacked in 1812. **Below** A tiger fight in Yogyakarta. Fights between buffaloes and tigers were commonly arranged as entertainment for European visitors to the courts. What the Europeans failed to realise was that these battles were a subtle joke at their expense: for the Javanese, the buffalo represented the natives, while the tiger represented the Europeans; and the buffalo almost always won the fight.



earlier 18th-century style of 'company colonialism' towards the grand imperialism of the coming Victorian Age.

During the previous century, in both British India and the Dutch East Indies, there had been room for compromise. The agents of the Dutch and British East India Companies had often tried to further European commercial interests without seeking to overturn the sovereignty of native courts. Some of their number had engaged with Asian cultures in a manner that would be anathema in a later epoch, participating in local society, legitimately marrying Asian women, and even converting to Islam.

Raffles' arrival in Java marked an abrupt end to such acculturation, and his five-year reign on the island was a microcosm of the wider transition from the era of the 'White Mughals' to that of the 'Queen Empress'.

Raffles rampant

The European enemy had been roundly trounced, but there were other powers in Java – the great native courts of the hinterland, Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Raffles decided that they constituted an unconscionable challenge to his authority.

By early 1812 he had decided that he needed to organise a crushing military defeat of one or other of these courts as 'decisive proof to the Native Inhabitants of Java of the strength and determination of the British Government'.

In June that year he made his move, ordering an attack on Yogyakarta on the flimsy pretext of an uncovered correspondence discussing an uprising against the Europeans which had, in fact, been instigated by the Surakarta court.

Yogyakarta was the more significant of the two realms and, wrote Raffles, 'the Sultan [of Yogyakarta] decidedly looks upon us as a less powerful people than the [Napoleonic] Government which proceeded us, and it becomes absolutely necessary for the tranquillity of the Country that he should be taught to think otherwise.'

If the conquest of Batavia had been a remarkable success for an outnumbered

During the coronation the courtiers were forced to kiss Raffles' knees in the ultimate Javanese act of subjugation.

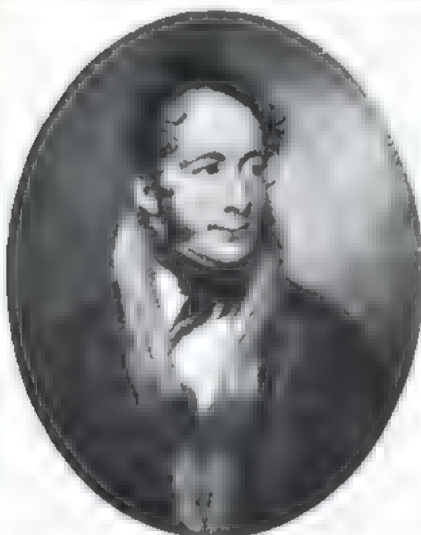
British force, the subsequent sacking of Yogyakarta was, on paper at least, a feat of almost superhuman status. On 20 June 1812, most of Britain's military manpower was tied up in Sumatra, where Raffles had ordered a punitive expedition against the Palembang Sultanate. With just 1,200 men at his disposal, therefore, he now instructed Gillespie to launch an attack on the walled city of Yogyakarta, a place defended by some 10,000 Javanese troops.

The storming of Yogyakarta

In truth, however, the turn of events was such an earth-shattering shock to the Javanese that their defence collapsed almost at once. Yogyakarta had inherited the mantle of past Javanese kingdoms such as Mataram and Majapahit. It was a place of high protocol and of a complex Muslim-Javanese courtly culture that drew on an older Hindu and Buddhist heritage.

During the previous two centuries, conflicts between the Dutch and the Javanese courts had been typified by formalised posturing and brinkmanship, and had then usually been resolved through face-saving diplomacy. The Sultan of Yogyakarta, Hamengkubuwono II, had never believed that the British would really attack, and once the sepoys began to surge over the walls his court descended into panic. As one Javanese prince, Arya Panular, noted, 'In battle [the British] were irresistible... they were as though protected by the very angels and they struck terror into men's hearts.'

The assault began at dawn, and by 9am it was all over. Though they had been outnumbered by almost ten to one, the British lost just 23 men. The Sultan was arrested and exiled, and the victors fell to enthusiastic looting of the city. Gillespie took away personal booty valued at £15,000 (half a million, in modern terms) while Raffles and the British resident at Yogyakarta, John Crawfurd, stole the entire contents of the court archives. The following afternoon the Crown Prince was placed on the throne as a British puppet, and during the coronation the courtiers were forced to kiss Raffles' knees in the ultimate Javanese act of subjugation.



ROLLO GILLESPIE (1766-1814)

Major-General Hugh Robert Rollo Gillespie was a very small man who crammed a very great deal into a turbulent life.

Born on 21 January 1766 in County Down into an aristocratic family descended from Jacobite rebels, he seemed set for the life of an indolent libertine. He was privately schooled in London, and his indulgent parents hoped that he would go on to Cambridge to study law.

Gillespie, however, suffered an 'insuperable aversion to the laborious application which was necessary to qualify him for distinction at the bar'. He joined the army instead, and was initially stationed in his native Ireland, where he eloped with the daughter of a local squire. He also spent several months on the run as a wanted murderer after killing the son of a Kildare landlord in a duel. He was eventually acquitted, and in 1791 he shipped out for the West Indies, where the Napoleonic conflict had spilled over into the tropics.

Gillespie spent a wildly adventurous decade in the Caribbean. On one occasion, in Saint-Domingue, he saw off a party of eight would-be assassins, killing six of them single-handed.

On a home visit in 1794 he ended up on the run from the police once more, after breaking the nose of a man who had refused to remove his hat during the national anthem in a theatre.

Right Javanese soldiers from the court of Yogyakarta.

Writing to Lord Minto to inform him of the victory, Raffles declared that it had 'afforded so decisive a proof to the Native Inhabitants of Java of the strength and determination of the British Government, that they now for the first time know their relative situation and importance... The European power is now for the first time paramount in Java.'

The return of the Dutch

After the fall of Yogyakarta, peace returned to Java. But the new British administration rapidly descended into disorder. A vicious clash of personalities emerged between Raffles and Gillespie.

They had been ill-suited to being left in charge of a complex colony – one man a bruising aristocratic war-hero, the other an ambitious if insecure middle-class civilian; and neither with any real experience of government. They were, according to one visitor, 'at constant variance and daggers drawn', and Gillespie eventually lodged formal accusations of corruption against his civilian counterpart. Meanwhile, a series of budgetary blunders and ill-planned and over-reaching reforms pushed the colony to the brink of an economic meltdown.

Raffles and Minto had dreamed of making Java a permanent British possession, controlling traffic between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. But in the circumstances the higher authorities were all too eager to hand



it back to the Dutch once the wars were over in Europe, and Holland had regained its sovereignty.

When they returned in 1816, the Dutch found administrative and financial chaos, but there was also another, more useful inheritance. The great native courts had finally been hobbled. There would be no return to old modes of compromise: the European power was indeed finally paramount in Java, and the scene had

been set for the coming colonial century, both in the Dutch East Indies, and in the wider Asian continent beyond. ■

Further reading

Tim Hannigan's *Raffles and the British Invasion of Java* (Monsoon Books), www.rafflesandjava.com



But for all these high jinks, Gillespie was also a thoroughly professional soldier. His 20th Regiment of Light Dragoons was known as one of the best run and best-equipped in the Caribbean – so much so that formal accusations of irregular financing were eventually leveled at Gillespie – though he was, once more, acquitted on all charges.

India service

He eventually left the Caribbean, and in 1805 took a command in the 19th Light Dragoons, based in Arcot in India. He set out to join his new regiment along the little-used overland route from Britain, dodging French spies in Eastern Europe, winning another duel in Istanbul, and avoiding murder by bandits in the Syrian desert. He had not long arrived at his post when he furthered his heroic reputation by quashing a mutiny by Indian troops at Vellore – one of the earliest instances of a sepoy uprising in British India.

By 1811 Gillespie was in possession of one of the most stellar military reputations in India (and he was also known as a notable Lothario, with

a taste for both native women and regimental wives and daughters). It was natural that he should be given a key role in the Java campaign – though his political battles with Thomas Stamford Raffles were among the hardest he ever fought.

After his disagreements with the lieutenant-governor became intolerable, he returned to India in late 1813 and took a command in Meerut. On 31 October 1814, at the start of the Gurkha War, Gillespie was killed while leading an attempt to take the small hill-fort of Kalunga by escalade – as he had successfully done with the much bigger fortifications of Cornelis and Yogyakarta. He was given a hero's burial in Meerut, but senior officers privately wrote that he had crossed the line into suicidal recklessness – the British were only eventually able to take the Gurkha fastness at Kalunga by shelling it to rubble.

Three years later the first Gurkha mercenaries were recruited to fight for the British – the fact that it was they who had finally felled the indestructible Rollo Gillespie was not least among their impressive qualifications.

Genealogy Special

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Japanese Jungle Holdouts

The fanaticism of the Imperial Japanese Army during the Second World War is legendary. **Mark Felton** explores one bizarre legacy: soldiers who continued the war in remote jungle locations long after 1945.

Above Young Japanese soldiers being rigorously drilled. Their training and devotion to their emperor led some to continue fighting the Second World War into the 1970s.

him had remained hidden in the jungle, convinced that World War II was still being fought.

When Japan surrendered in August 1945, the Imperial Army and Navy still controlled a vast swathe of Asia, including eastern China, Malaya, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, and dozens of far-flung tropical island groups. These territories were garrisoned by some three million soldiers.

Most of these soldiers knew nothing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They were well-armed and mentally conditioned to fight on to eventual victory or an honourable death. Surrender was anathema to them.

Lost in transmission

Orders were transmitted to larger formations telling them to stay in their barracks and await the arrival of Allied forces who would take their formal surrender. But tens of thousands of Japanese troops never received the order as their communications with Japan had broken down or their units had been smashed and scattered during the fierce battles across the Pacific.

A small, thin, middle-aged officer, his uniform patched and darned, his field service cap emblazoned with the yellow star of the Imperial Japanese Army, stepped forward in a jungle clearing and bowed stiffly before lifting up his samurai sword and offering it to the assembled officials in surrender. The place was the island of Lubang in the Philippines. The date was 9 March 1974.

Fifty-one-year-old Second Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda had finally given up resistance. The last thing his commanding officer had said to him was 'Whatever happens, we'll come back for you.'

Twenty-nine years later, the Japanese did return. Onoda was one of the last recorded Japanese 'holdouts' – living relics of a war that had ended nearly three decades before.

While the rest of the world had entered the Cold War, Onoda and others like



They were well-armed and mentally conditioned to fight on to eventual victory or an honourable death.

Others, including complete units, refused to believe that such a shameful order could have emanated from their divine Emperor Hirohito – these diehards believed it was an Allied trick. They determined to stay in the jungle and wait for their army to recapture the lost territories.

Between 1945 and 1961, many of these 'holdouts' were caught or persuaded to surrender by Japanese officials. What is not widely known is that some Japanese units and stragglers even launched attacks on American occupation forces or the armies of the newly independent post-war nations, necessitating dangerous operations to capture or kill them.

The empire fights on

One of the most notorious was Captain Sakae Oba on Saipan, who continued to lead his 46 heavily armed men in attacks on US forces until convinced to surrender by a former Japanese general in December 1945.

On another occasion, in the mountains south of Manila on 25 January 1946, American and Filipino forces mounted a joint operation to eliminate a 120-man Japanese unit. In the vicious fighting that followed, 72 Japanese were killed.

In Lubang in the Philippines, a 30-man Japanese unit was brought to battle on 22 February 1946. Eight Allied soldiers died, along with an unknown number of Japanese. The following month, a further 41 Japanese soldiers emerged on Lubang and surrendered, eight months after the war had ended. On Peleliu, a 33-man Japanese force attacked American patrols throughout March and early April 1947, until persuaded to surrender by a former Japanese admiral.

And so it continued all over Asia in the immediate aftermath of the war. In the Philippines, in April 1947, a seven-man Japanese heavy-mortar team emerged from the jungle on Palawan Island and surrendered. In the same month, on Luzon, 15 Japanese troops finally gave up. Four-and-a-half years after the Americans had captured Guadalcanal in the British

Above The Japanese surrender on USS *Missouri* at Tokyo Bay, 9 September 1945. So unlikely was this event in the eyes of the holdouts that they regarded leaflets dropped by American aircraft informing them of the war's end as an Allied trick.

Solomon Islands, the last Japanese soldier finally emerged from the interior and surrendered on 27 October 1947.

The last sizeable Japanese unit to surrender was on Mindanao in the Philippines. Two hundred troops were persuaded to give up in January 1948, surrendering well-maintained rifles and machine-guns.

In New Guinea, site of the valiant Australian defence of the Kokoda Track in 1942 and the fierce battles around Port Moresby, local police apprehended eight Japanese soldiers in 1950. They were survivors of a division that had been destroyed during the Battle of Finschhafen in September and October 1943, and the retreat of the starving Japanese towards Madang. They had been hiding in dense jungle for seven years.

Then, four years later, in 1954, New Guinea police captured another four Japanese holdouts, the last survivors of a group of 89 Japanese who had forced marched from Wewak to Hollandia in April 1944. Their companions had all died of disease or starvation in the jungle. ▶



Exotic beings

During the 1950s, as Japan rebuilt its economy and emerged as a deeply pacifist country, these jungle holdouts were not viewed as fanatics but as victims of the war. The soldiers captured in New Guinea were portrayed in Japan as exotic beings – 'jungle men'.

By 1955 this view had altered somewhat, according to historian Beatrice Trefalt, and the Japanese came to view these lost soldiers 'as a moving image of the fallen soldier, in other words, as "dead soldiers" accidentally and unexpectedly alive'.

Later, as more soldiers appeared throughout the 1970s, the Japanese public's perception of them changed still further, and they began to be seen as heroic examples of endurance and courage to the younger post-war generation.

The 1960s had been relatively quiet: only two Japanese holdouts emerged, on Guam, surrendering in 1961. They had held out for an amazing 16 years. The Japanese, and the world as a whole, assumed that the phenomenon was by then extinct. Then, incredibly, in 1972, after a staggering 28 years in hiding, a single holdout turned up alive on Guam.



Shoichi Yokoi: the 1972 holdout

Corporal Shoichi Yokoi's discovery hit the headlines around the world. Yokoi, of the 38th Infantry Regiment, had fled into the jungle in July 1944 along with many other stragglers following the American victory. Many of these men had surrendered in the 1940s, '50s, and early '60s, or they had died of injuries, illness, or starvation. But not all.

Yokoi and two comrades had constructed an underground hiding place and subsisted for years on a diet of seafood and coconuts. Sometime during the 1960s,

the two other soldiers who were with Yokoi moved away and later died of starvation. Yokoi stayed hidden, putting his pre-war tailoring skills to use by making himself a new uniform out of tree bark.

Two local hunters fishing on the Talofofo River in January 1972 discovered him. Yokoi, like many other holdouts, had seen leaflets announcing the Japanese surrender dropped by American aircraft in the 1940s, but he believed them to be a trick and decided to stay in hiding.

His unaltered wartime psyche was demonstrated when he was returned with considerable media coverage to Japan. He stated: 'It is with much embarrassment that I return.' Yokoi said that he wished to return his rusty and useless Arisaka rifle to 'the Honourable Emperor', adding 'I am sorry I did not serve His Majesty to my satisfaction'.

Yokoi's rehabilitation was swift and impressive considering that he had

the two other soldiers who were with Yokoi moved away and later died of starvation. Yokoi stayed hidden, putting his pre-war tailoring skills to use by making himself a new uniform out of tree bark.

spent almost three decades subsisting in the jungle. He married, became a TV presenter, and even ran for parliament in 1974. In 1991 he was granted an audience with Emperor Akihito, during which he said that he regretted having failed to serve the Imperial Army well and was overcome with emotion. Yokoi died in 1997.

Hiroo Onoda: the 1974 holdout

The Japanese government became so concerned that other middle-aged men like Corporal Yokoi might still be in hiding in South-East Asia that they created a special unit to look for them comprising officials from the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare

The most famous holdout of all emerged from the jungles of Lubang and surrendered in March 1974. Second Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda was very different from Yokoi because he had continued a violent guerrilla campaign that caused several deaths and gave rise to major military and police operations over 30 years

'Every Japanese soldier was prepared for death, but as an intelligence officer I was ordered to conduct guerrilla warfare and not to die,' said Onoda in 2011. 'I had to follow my orders as I was a soldier.' He took a small team of Japanese soldiers into the island's interior and waged a long and aggressive campaign

Along with Corporal Shōichi Shimada, Private First Class Yuichi Akatsu, and Private Kinshichi Kozuka, Onoda moved every five days to avoid capture, the men living off bananas, water buffalo, wild boar, chickens, and iguanas.

Occasionally Onoda and his men would emerge from their mountainous jungle hideouts to shoot cows owned by local Philippine peasants. This was always risky because the gunfire attracted local police, and on several occasions the Japanese holdouts were fired at.

In 1949 Private Akatsu decided to leave the group after an argument. Onoda thought that he would starve to death, but Akatsu managed to survive for six months on his own before he surrendered to a Philippine Army patrol. Later Onoda discovered a note from Akatsu that stated that the war was over and the Philippine troops were friendly.

Akatsu led soldiers into the mountains in 1950 in an attempt to locate Onoda's group and persuade them to surrender. They never found them. Onoda considered Akatsu to be a traitor and working for the enemy.

Yokoi had seen leaflets announcing the Japanese surrender, but believed them to be a trick and stayed in hiding.

Guerrilla warfare

In 1952 the Philippine and Japanese governments made a further attempt to locate and capture Onoda's group. Letters and photographs from the holdouts' families were dropped over the jungle. 'The leaflets they dropped were filled with mistakes, so I judged it was a plot by the Americans,' said Onoda.

In June 1953 Corporal Shimada was shot and wounded in the leg by local fishermen when the group was on one of its regular village raids. Onoda and Private Kozuka nursed Shimada back to health, but the corporal was killed during a firefight with searchers on 7 May 1954.

Onoda and Kozuka continued to raid local settlements for supplies, often burning the harvested rice and shooting at local peasants. It has been estimated that Onoda's depredations killed or wounded around 30 Filipinos over the decades

On 19 October 1972 the two holdouts were busy burning rice stocks in a village when armed police arrived. During the following gunfight Kozuka was hit twice and killed. Onoda fled into the jungle vowing to kill anyone who came after him.

A Japanese student and adventurer, Norio Suzuki, set out to find Onoda in 1974. It seemed unlikely that he would succeed where governments and armies had failed, but camping alone within Onoda's 'territory' he managed to strike up a hesitant friendship with the Japanese officer. Suzuki persuaded Onoda to come to a parley in a jungle clearing to meet with Japanese and Filipino representatives. At the meeting Onoda stated that he could not surrender until he had received a direct order from his superior, and he went back into hiding. ▸

Below Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka with Hiroo Onoda (on the right), the Japanese soldier who remained in hiding for 30 years, pictured here in 1974.



A living relic

Finally, on 9 March 1974, Lieutenant Onoda met with former Major Taniguchi, his old commander on Lubang, who ordered him to hand over his samurai sword and surrender with honour. Hiroo Onoda, still the punctilious officer that he had been in 1945, immediately obeyed. Onoda was very well armed, and surrendered his sword as well as a functioning Arisaka Type-99 rifle, 500 rounds of ammunition, several hand grenades, and a commando dagger.

On his return to Japan, Onoda became something of a celebrity. He was different from other recently returned holdouts – he had been an officer and he had not stopped fighting, however misguided his resistance had ultimately been.

This living relic from the war may have impressed modern Japan, but the modern Japanese did not impress Onoda. 'Japan's philosophy and ideas changed dramatically after World War II. That philosophy clashed with mine, so I went to live in Brazil.'

Now aged 90, Onoda has returned to live in Japan, but he still spends three months of every year in Brazil, and was honoured with a medal by the Brazilian Air Force in 2004. In 1996 Onoda returned – controversially – to Lubang and donated US\$10,000 to a local school, perhaps as recompense for the harm he and his men had caused during their three-decade-long terror campaign. When asked why he held out for so long, Onoda's single-mindedness was plain: 'I became an officer and I received an order. If I could not carry it out, I would feel shame.'

Teruo Nakamura: another 1974 holdout

Within months of Onoda's capture, reports started to filter in from Morotai in Indonesia where locals had reported Japanese soldiers hiding in the forest for decades. The Japanese government set up loudspeakers around the island's mountainous interior and blasted the area with the wartime Japanese national anthem. Then, in October 1974, an Indonesian Air Force pilot spotted a small hut hidden in the jungle.

Two months later Private Teruo Nakamura of the 4th Takasago Volunteer Unit emerged from hiding, armed with a functioning rifle and his last five rounds of ammunition, and surrendered to local troops. He had no idea that the war was over and had long believed that he would be killed if captured. He had built a

small hut in the forest, set within a 20- by 30-metre fenced field.

Nakamura, a native conscripted Formosan, chose to return directly to Taiwan. His capture did not excite the Japanese media – Onoda was a Japanese officer, whereas Nakamura was a conscript from a former Japanese colony. Nakamura died of lung cancer in 1979.

Were there any more?

Since Onoda's surrender, reports have continued to surface almost up to the present day of Japanese holdouts. In 1980 it was widely reported that a Captain Fumio Nakahira had been discovered on Mindoro after 36 years in hiding. This story proved to be a fake. In 1989, on the Pacific island of Vella Lavella, locals reported that old Japanese soldiers had been pilfering food and supplies for decades. These stories were probably hoaxes designed to lure rich Japanese tourists to the island.

In 1992, on Kolombangara, an island north of New Georgia that was bypassed by American forces in 1943 during the island-hopping campaign, locals reported two or three elderly Japanese holdouts. Although searches of the mountains and jungle were conducted, no evidence was found.



Above Are there any more Japanese soldiers still fighting WWII? The holdouts phenomenon goes some way to showing just how formidable and dedicated the WWII Japanese soldier was.

Most recently, in 2001, holdouts were reported on Guadalcanal, but again no concrete evidence has been discovered since the last Japanese surrendered there in 1947. Many Japanese soldiers undoubtedly remained in hiding throughout Asia and the Pacific into the 1970s and were never found. Perhaps a few managed to survive into more recent times until disease, accidents, or old age carried them off.

We may never know the full extent of the Japanese holdouts phenomenon, nor fully understand why Japanese soldiers behaved as they did, but clearly the Japanese soldier remained a formidable, tough, and single-minded adversary, in some cases even many decades after defeat. ☐

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Felton writes widely on WWII and war crimes in Asia, and lectures at Fudan University, Shanghai. He is the author of *Japan's Gestapo* and *The Devil's Doctors*, which exposes Japanese medical experiments on Allied POWs.

WWII DESTROYER

DESTROYER!

THE TORPEDO BOAT'S EVOLUTION



Naval historian **Patrick Boniface** looks at how destroyers changed from simple escorts to versatile warships – and proved themselves in the deadliest maritime clashes of World War II.



The sea was choppy and the winds were at near gale force as dawn broke on 8 April 1940. Under the command of Lieutenant Commander G B Roope, the destroyer *Glowworm* had become detached from the battlecruiser *Renown* while searching for a man overboard near Trondheim in Norway. She sighted two German destroyers, the *Hans Lüdemann* and the *Bernd von Arnim*, and fired the first shots of the Norwegian campaign at the pair of them.

Unbeknownst to *Glowworm*, the German ships were escorting the heavy cruiser *Hipper*, which now bore down on the small lone British destroyer and blasted her with 8in shells, one of which smashed into *Glowworm* amidships.

Glowworm turned and fired a spread of torpedoes, while hiding behind a smoke-screen. But *Hipper* was not going to be denied a victory, and followed *Glowworm* through the smoke to fire at point-blank range on the British ship.

Lieutenant Commander Roope, knowing his ship was lost, turned and rammed the heavy cruiser. *Glowworm* capsized on impact and her stock of ▶

Above The destroyer HMS *Glowworm* lays down smoke shortly before being sunk by the heavy cruiser *Hipper* on 8 April 1940. **Left** Royal Navy sailors aboard a destroyer on escort duty fire warning shots towards an unidentified aircraft using a 2-pdr pom-pom gun.

For 30 minutes, the destroyer *Kelly* hung on with hundreds of men trapped in her hull; 279 men were rescued.

depth charges exploded, killing 109 of her own crew (including Roope) and inflicting serious damage to the German cruiser.

The age of the destroyer

WWII was the destroyer's time. They had become the most numerous naval vessels and arguably the most versatile, serving in every conflict and in every naval theatre. They were utilised in ways their designers could never have foreseen, and were adapted radically during the course of the war to better reflect the changing needs of modern naval warfare.

The destroyer evolved from torpedo boats that escorted the Battle Fleets of WWI but bore only a passing resemblance to their predecessors. In 1910 the Admiralty, which had led the development of the 'torpedo boat destroyer', enforced rigid specifications and placed orders for 14 Acheron-class boats. The Admiralty also laid down strict operational functions for these new and evolving ships: screening the fleet against hostile torpedo craft; searching a hostile coast ahead of the fleet; harassment of enemy torpedo craft as they were leaving and returning to their ports, torpedo attacks against the enemy fleet.

During the Battle of Jutland, the destroyer concept was first tested in battle. More than 60 destroyers were involved, and on board two – *Nestor* and *Shark* – their commanders, the Honourable E B S Bingham and Commander Loftus Jones, were awarded Victoria Crosses (Jones posthumously) for their heroism.

Eight destroyers were sent to the bottom at Jutland, but by forcing the

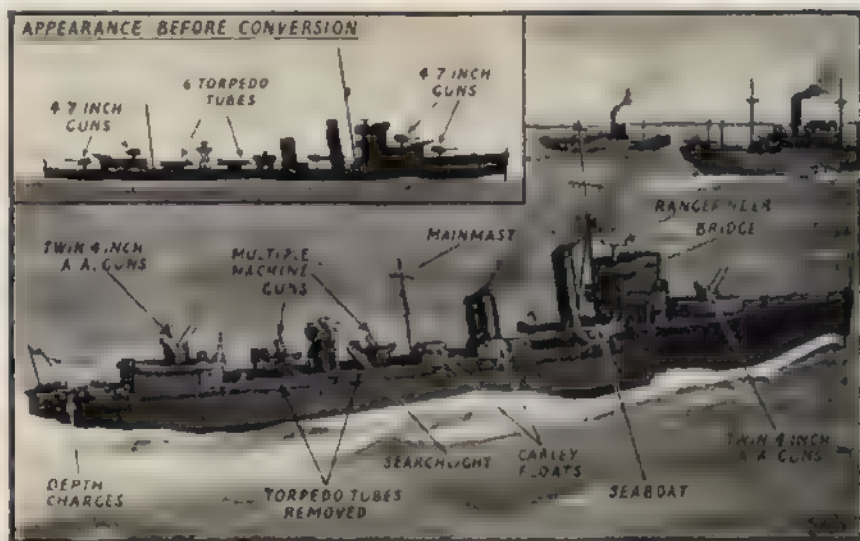
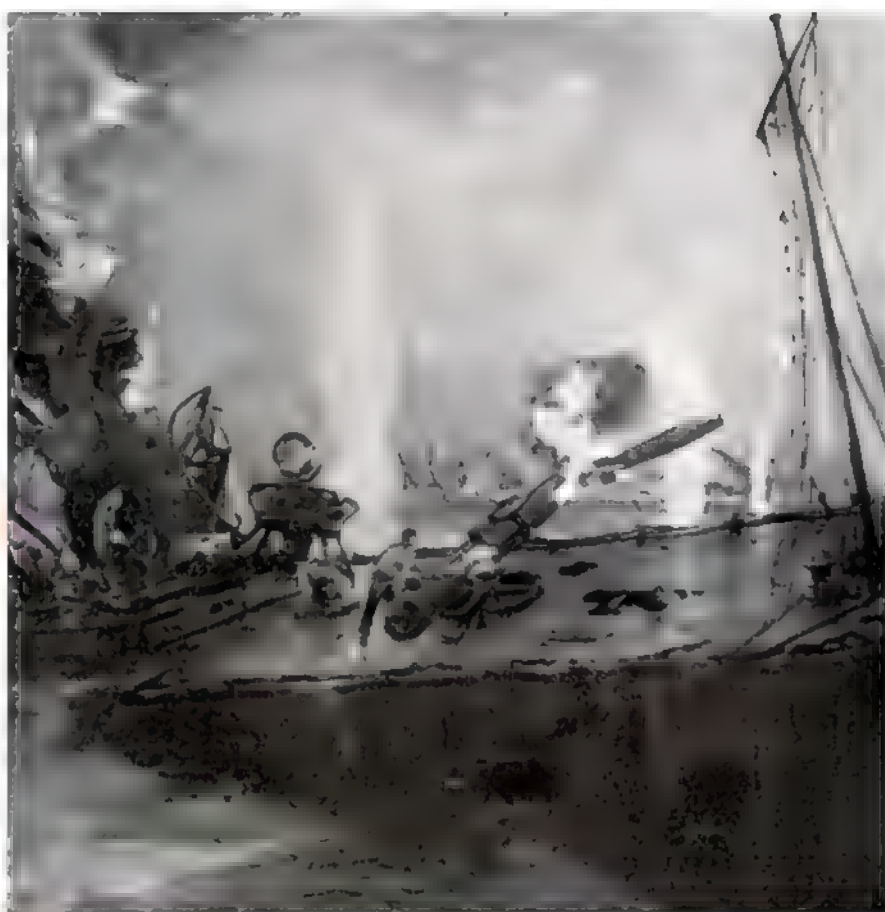
German fleet to turn away, they had proved themselves as an invaluable part of modern naval warfare.

World War I would see the construction of the world's largest fleet of destroyers. But with peace in 1918 came a rapid reversal, with 433 destroyers being scrapped before WWII, leaving just 113 in September 1939. A further 80 were reactivated from reserve and 50 elderly Town-class American ships were purchased. The Admiralty

Top The destroyer *Shark* still firing as it sinks, one of eight sent to the bottom of the sea during the Battle of Jutland. **Above** Diagram of the modifications made to a destroyer to prepare it for convoy duties.

placed orders for 127 new destroyers during the war years.

During WWII every warring nation operated destroyers. Their versatility shone through, with every navy using their vessels in remarkably different ways.



The British experience

The first half of the Second World War saw Britain on the back foot, fighting a defensive war. The Royal Navy's fleet of destroyers served mostly in the North Atlantic escorting vital convoys during the Battle of the Atlantic.

The destroyer's torpedo armament, ideal for surface actions, had some limited impact on the U-boats. But it was the depth-charge that proved to be most effective against German submarines. British destroyers also escorted convoys to Russia enduring hideous conditions, with many being attacked by the submarines they hunted. As a result, a destroyer's active service was often woefully short.

The British destroyer *Kelly*'s career, like so many of her contemporaries, lasted only a few precious months. In that time she exemplified everything that a destroyer could achieve. She also became known as something of a 'lucky ship'.

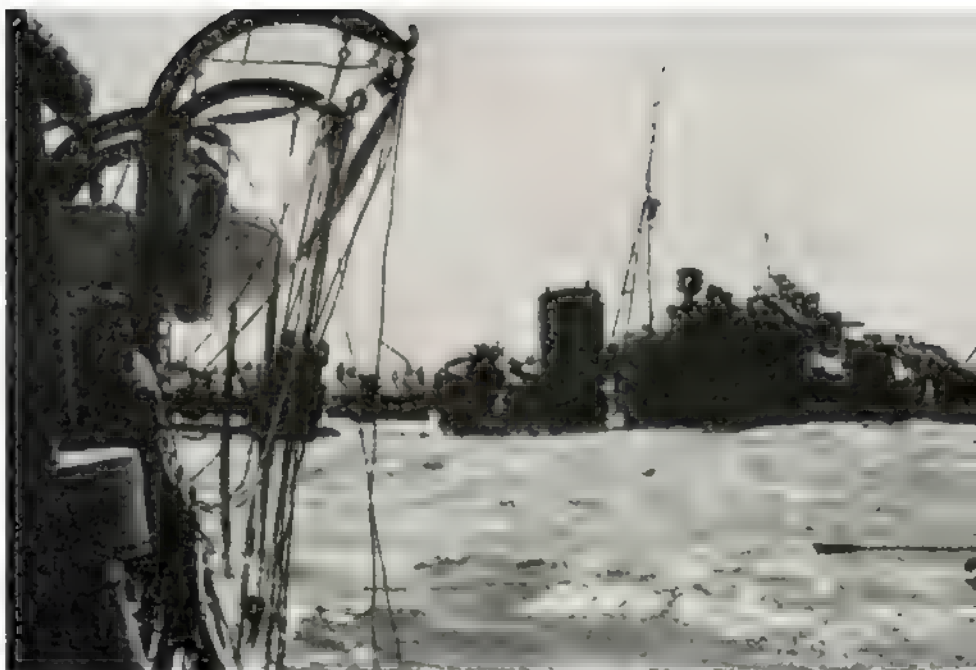
Kelly was commissioned as leader of the 5th Destroyer Flotilla in August 1939 and her first (and only) Captain was Lord Louis Mountbatten. One of the first tasks for her ship's company was to repaint the ship into her wartime colour scheme with a coat of what sailors call 'Crabfat', a drab matt-grey finish.

The ship's first wartime task was to evacuate the Duke and Duchess of Windsor (former King Edward VII) from exile in France. The Duke and Duchess boarded the destroyer at La Havre, and the pair was soon safe at Portsmouth. After transferring to Plymouth, her next mission was a more unpleasant one: retrieving the bodies and rescuing survivors from the doomed aircraft carrier *Courageous*.

After a couple of months at Scapa Flow, the destroyer received an emergency call from a tanker which had set off a mine near the Tyne estuary. *Kelly* and *Mohawk* were sent to escort rescue tugs sent to save the tanker. *Kelly* moved in alongside to take off survivors but detonated another mine severely damaging her stern. The destroyer was towed back to the Tyne for repairs.

Back in action

Kelly re-entered service in February 1940 but during manoeuvres in a snowstorm collided with the destroyer *Gurkha* on 2 March. The glancing blow was sufficient to send *Kelly* back to a dry dock for eight weeks.



Her next adventure was in Norway where, with five other destroyers, *Kelly* sailed to Namsos to evacuate the Anglo-French force. On 3 May she watched as Luftwaffe dive bombers sank the *Afridi* and the French *Bison*. One week later, while in the Kattegat and in company with *Kandahar* and *Bulldog*, *Kelly* was hit by a torpedo fired by the E-boat S-31 under the command of Oberleutnant zur See Hermann Opdenhoff. He would later be awarded the Knight's Cross for this action. The weapon struck close to the boiler spaces, causing an immediate loss of steam and power. On inspection, a 15m-wide hole in the ship stretched from the keel to the waterline. Once the immediate threat of sinking had been averted, *Bulldog* took *Kelly* under tow.

The S-31 was one of four E-boats in the area, another of which caused yet further drama around midnight. The German boat, wanting to sink *Kelly*, closed on the *Bulldog* and, instead of firing a torpedo, roared out of the night at her, sideswiping both *Bulldog* and *Kelly*'s starboard sides. Fittings were exchanged from the destroyer as her jagged hull ripped through the wooden hull of the E-boat. Having seen enough, the E-boat disappeared into the night without a shot being fired.

The tow back to Britain took four days at just three knots, and was punctuated by repeated E-boat and dive bomber attacks. *Kelly* eventually arrived safely on the River Tyne.

In April 1941, *Kelly* was based at Malta, where she formed part of

Above The destroyer *Kelly*, heavily damaged by a torpedo during an E Boat attack in May 1940.

Force K. Nightly forays into the Mediterranean and Aegean were made to seek out and attack Italian troop and supply convoys heading to North Africa. May 1941 saw the situation in Crete, following the evacuation of 50,000 troops, grow steadily worse for the British. On 21 May *Juno* was lost to aerial attack; on 22 May *Greyhound* was sunk, along with the cruisers *Fiji* and *Gloucester*, the latter pair only after all anti-aircraft ammunition had been fired at the swarms of Luftwaffe aircraft ranged against them.

On 22 May *Kelly* arrived at Crete together with sister-ships *Kashmir*, *Kelvin*, *Kipling*, and *Jackal*. She bombarded Maleme airfield with *Kashmir* but, as dawn broke, the two ships were barely clear of the island when 24 Ju 87 Stukas of 1 Stukageschwader, flying from airfields in the Peloponnese, region attacked.

Frantic manoeuvres from both ships followed, together with fire from 2-pdrs, 12.7mm machine-guns, and 20mm cannons. Even the main 4.7in guns were used against the Stukas, which made repeated and determined attacks from all quarters. The *Kashmir* was sunk first, before the Luftwaffe turned its full fury on the *Kelly*.

Turning at full speed, the destroyer was struck by a bomb, just aft of amidships, the *Kelly* rolled over onto her beam ends before capsizing. For 30 minutes, she hung on with hundreds of men trapped ▶



inside her hull. Before the hulk slipped beneath the waves, 279 survivors, including Lord Louis Mountbatten, were rescued. His final words on the loss of his ship and nearly half her crew were, 'We didn't leave the *Kelly*, the *Kelly* left us!'

The American experience

When thinking of classic WWII naval actions, people invariably think of battleships slugging it out like pugilists. But more often than not naval battles involved destroyers, particularly for the US Navy and their fight against the Japanese. Many of these encounters were conducted in the inky black darkness of the Pacific Ocean at night. One such battle occurred in October 1943 off the island of Vella Lavella; the fighting was bitter, bloody, vicious, resulting in no clear victor, with both the Americans and Japanese sustaining losses.

The small island of Vella Lavella is located some 200 miles from Guadalcanal. On 15 August, US troops stormed ashore to oust the Japanese as part of Operation Cartwheel. After a month of fighting, the Japanese were forced back and only held on in the north-western corner of the island.

Staring defeat in the face, the Japanese hastily organised an

evacuation plan to get the garrison of 600 men to safety. On 6 October 1943, three destroyers and a number of auxiliaries, which would be escorted by a further six old destroyers, would come in close to shore, embark the Japanese troops, and steam away under cover of darkness. That was the plan. The Japanese naval force was under the command of Rear Admiral Matsuji Ijuin, and he flew his flag in the destroyer *Akigumo*. The rest of his force consisted of the destroyers *Fumitsuki*, *Matsukaze*, *Yunagi*, *Isokaze*, *Kazegumo*, *Yugumo*, *Shigure*, and *Samudare*.

In poor visibility, the USS *O'Bannon* ploughed straight into the immobile USS *Chevalier*, reducing the force to just one ship.

Above One of the US destroyers acquired by the RN watches over a convoy in the Atlantic.

Evacuation

Matsuji Ijuin's strategy was well under way when the movements were spotted by American air reconnaissance. With his position and course established, the information was duly relayed to the nearest American destroyers, USS *O'Bannon*, USS *Chevalier* and USS *Selfridge*. The latter was under the command of Captain Frank Walker, whose orders were explicit: 'rendezvous with another trio of destroyers and then make for the likely Japanese evacuation point.'

However, Walker and the USS *Selfridge* had been spotted by a Japanese aircraft, and he knew he had to act swiftly. The other three destroyers were some hours away, and so Walker decided to advance towards the superior Japanese force alone.

Rear Admiral Ijuin got his evacuation force away, and then turned his destroyers back to face the oncoming Americans. He split his remaining six destroyers into two columns, with four in one line and the other pair forming the other line. At 22.45, the Japanese had almost crossed Walker's T, but crucially

took no offensive action. Instead, Ijuin ordered the Japanese columns to make two abrupt course changes, perhaps to prevent the Americans from establishing range and distance.

When the range was down to 840 metres, the Japanese fired off 14 torpedoes into the deadly dark night. Only a quarter moon's light cut through the heavy rain squalls and visibility was close to zero – horrible conditions in which to carry out a hastily organised attack. The Japanese destroyer *Yugumo*, closest to the American destroyers, broke formation first and at high speed completed a three-quarter circle. The manoeuvre allowed her to loose off eight torpedoes, but also opened her up to withering gunfire from USS *Chevalier*, USS *Selfridge*, and USS *O'Bannon*.

Trading blows

Ijuin ordered his remaining ships to make smoke and tried to pull away. The unfortunate *Yugumo*, meanwhile, was struck by an American torpedo at 23.05, the explosion ripping through the hull and killing dozens of men on board. The deaths were almost instantly avenged when one of *Yugumo*'s own torpedoes struck the USS *Chevalier*, shearing off her bows and detonating her forward magazine. She immediately lost control and slewed around at almost full speed.

In the poor visibility, the following USS *O'Bannon* ploughed straight into the immobile USS *Chevalier*, causing even more damage to the destroyer and reducing Frank Walker's force to just his own ship, USS *Selfridge*. Bravely, or foolishly, Captain Walker bore down on two undamaged Japanese destroyers.

At full speed, he advanced towards his targets, only to find himself in the middle of a spread of 16 Japanese torpedoes. Amazingly the destroyer missed 15 of the weapons, but the 16th found its mark. The torpedo struck below B turret, and the explosion tore away the destroyer's complete bow section. The heavy gun mounting hung uselessly in the water, seemingly by sheer force of will.

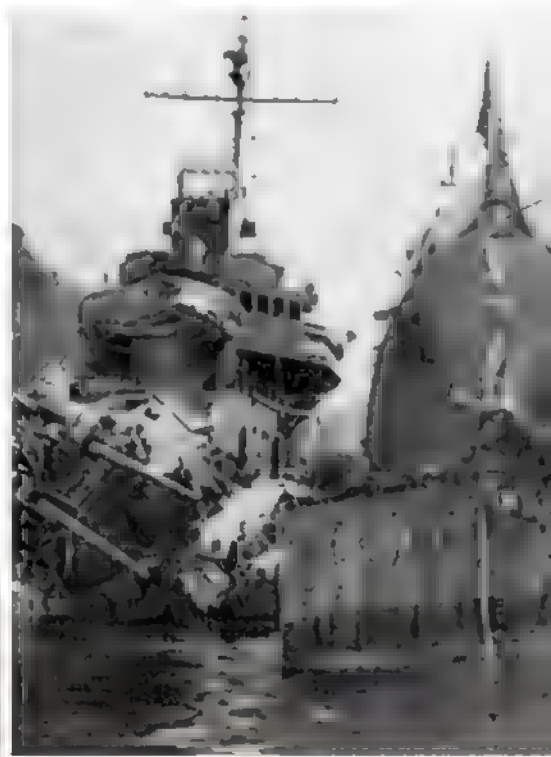
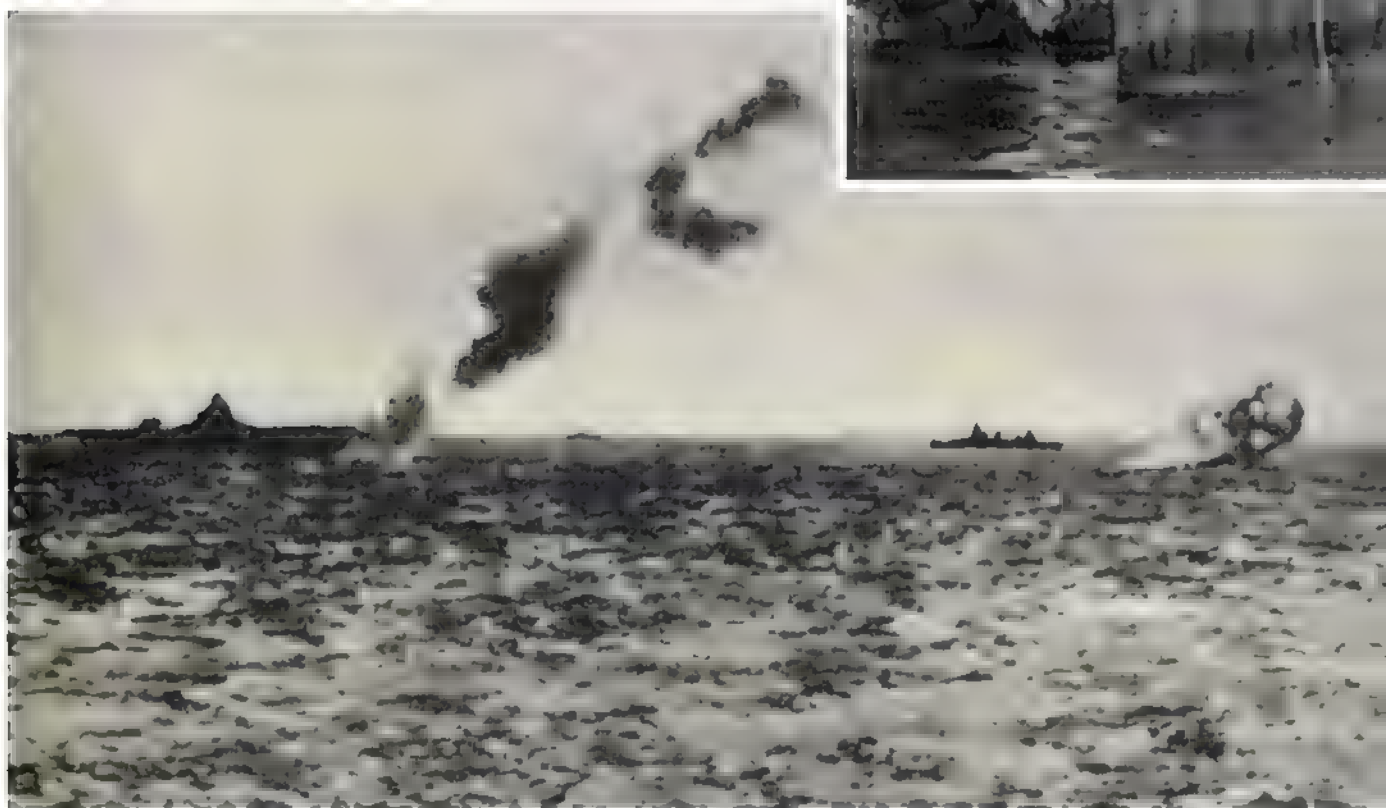
Rear Admiral Ijuin saw the American ships' predicament and decided that it was time to withdraw. After all he had lost just one ship, the *Yugumo*, to the Americans' three. At a range of eight miles, he fired off the remaining torpedoes at the stationary American warships, and left the scene at high speed to rendezvous with the fleeing evacuation force.

To add insult to injury, only 16 minutes after the end of the 22-minute engagement the three American reinforcement destroyers – USS *Taylor*, USS *Ralph Talbot*, and USS *La Valette* – arrived to find three severely damaged

warships. USS *Chevalier* was so badly damaged that, once the surviving crew had been transferred to the other ships, she was sunk by gunfire at 03.00 the following morning.

At the beginning of WWII the destroyer was simply an escort vessel, but through adaptation and constant development they ended the war as general purpose warships that frequently took on the enemy face-to-face in deadly combat. Some idea of the savagery of the fighting endured by the destroyers can be gauged by the statistic that during the six years of WWII, no less than 164 British destroyers were lost in action, or the equivalent of one in three of the type in the fleet. ☐

Below US carrier and destroyer escort under attack from Japanese planes, 1943. **Inset** The US Navy destroyers USS *Selfridge* (left) and USS *O'Bannon* after being damaged in the Battle of Vella Lavella on 7 October 1943.



Studying Military History



King's College Department of War Studies

In 2012, the Department of War Studies at King's College London celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Throughout this time, it has been the undisputed, world leading centre of the interdisciplinary study of warfare.

Whilst the study of military history has, until recently, been largely neglected by universities around the world, at King's it has always been, as it will remain, at the very heart of the successful War Studies project. Starting life with just a handful of staff and students, the War Studies Group, which now includes the Department of Defence Studies, is now able to boast over 80 faculty members along with many associated teaching and research fellows.

King's College London, therefore, has the highest concentration of military historians anywhere, plus a range of related expertise and experience that simply cannot be matched. A lecture at the College on 18 January this year by Leon Panetta, the US Secretary of State for Defense, is the latest example of the quality and profile of the speakers the college is able to attract routinely, making this an extraordinary environment for anyone with a broad interest in the study of warfare. Naturally, such guest speakers complement an active historical research culture in the department within a number of research groups.

Part of the unique experience of King's students is the vastness of the resources that are available. Most notably, the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, founded at King's in 1964, has developed to become one of the major collections of national and international importance.

The former private library of Captain Sir Basil Liddell Hart has been supplemented over the years by generous donations of material from such sources as the private libraries of Professor Sir Michael Howard and of Professor Sir Lawrence Freedman, who not only led the department for many years but is believed by many to have been the leading voice in the fields of History, International Relations and Strategic Studies themselves!

With the accession of an average of thirty named collections every year, this is an archive that is growing in step with the ambitions of the College to build on its reputation as the leading centre of military history in the world.

Located right in the heart of central London, students at King's College can also take advantage of the College's main library on Chancery Lane, which once housed the Public Record Office. In addition to this, there are a number of

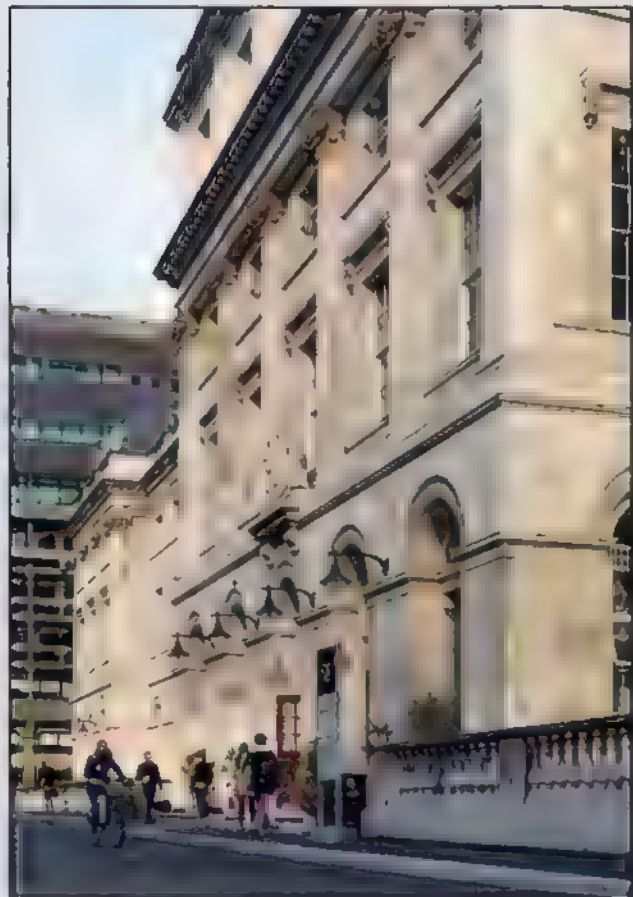
other libraries, archives, and think tanks with which the department has forged links.

As well as the long-running BA and MA programmes in War Studies, the department has also been running a specialist MA in the History of Warfare since 2005. Designed as a platform for further research at the PhD level, many graduates have carried on their research, some into successful academic careers.

The History of Warfare can, of course, also be taken as a stand-alone degree to launch careers in other directions or simply to indulge a passion for military history. Considering the operational, strategic, social, cultural, political, and theoretical dimensions of war, the degree course also provides in-depth training in the skills and methods required of the serious historian.

There are opportunities to study ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary history alike. Optional courses available from other programmes within War Studies, such as Intelligence, International Relations, or Conflict Security and Development, as well as courses in the Department of History or from the Institute of Contemporary British History, give this programme its unparalleled richness.

In this college, founded in 1828 by the Duke of Wellington, victor at Waterloo, military history has found its natural home, and it is safe to assume that its future there will be bright for at least another fifty years.



MARCH 2013

OnManoeuvres

DATES TO REMEMBER

THIS MARCH

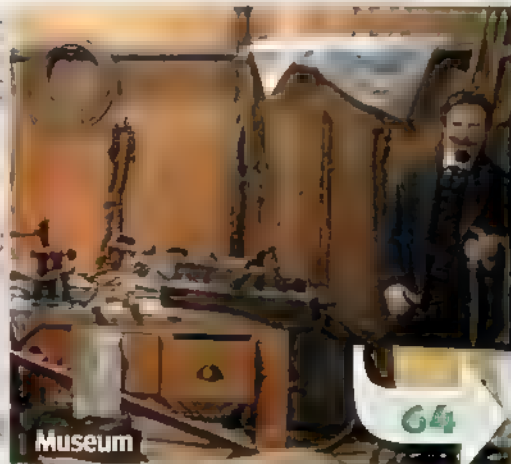
March A new exhibition opens at the National Army Museum this month exploring over 400 years of Britain's key battles. It is a must-see for anyone who has enjoyed *MHM's* History of the British Army in 25 Battles series, and part of the museum's major new online and event programme. If that doesn't keep you busy, there are plenty of other lectures, conferences, and events to entertain all this March.

Our museum review has Keith Robinson visiting a military museum at the heart of the British Army's Aldershot home.

And, finally, Stephen Roberts explores the little-known battlefield of Cropredy Bridge, the site of an English Civil War action that took place in the summer of 1664.

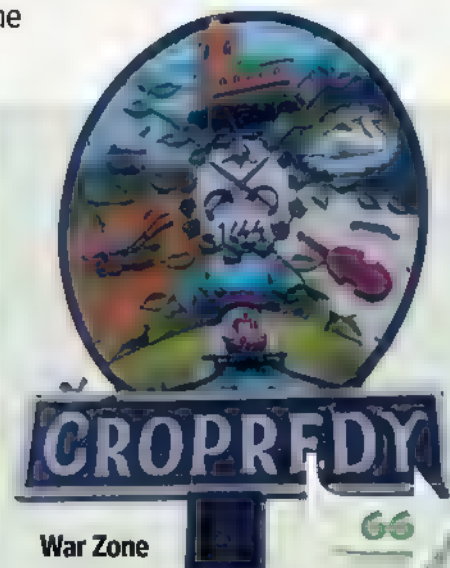


62



Museum

64



War Zone

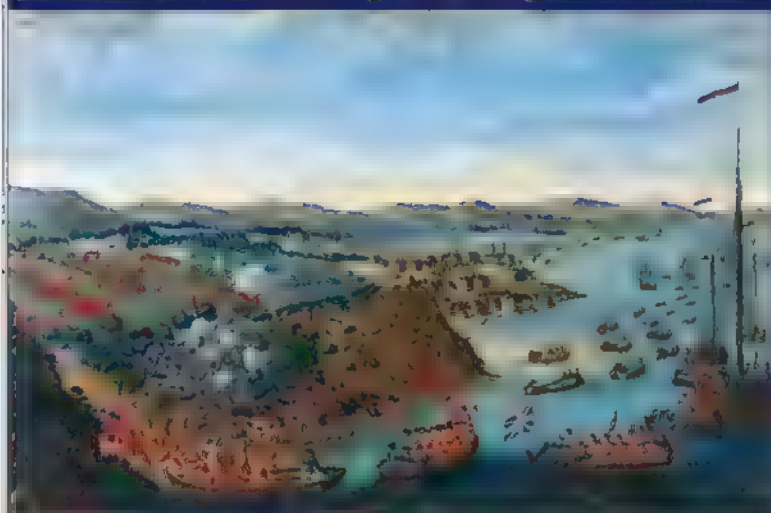
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DATES TO REMEMBER

EXHIBITION



BRITAIN'S GREATEST BATTLES



For those of you who have been enjoying *MHM's* 'History of the British Army in 25 Battles' series, a new exhibition opening at the National Army Museum (NAM) is a must-see. Opening on 13 February 2013, the exhibition explores over 400 years of Britain's battles from Culloden to Rorke's Drift.

'Britain's Greatest Battles' examines the key events, the impact, and the legacies of the 20 top British battles chosen by NAM's curators. It reveals how a mix of tactics, luck, and innovation have helped the British Army to victory.

Original artefacts help tell the stories behind these battles, giving the real-life experiences of soldiers on both sides who fought in them. Encompassing changes in warfare, politics, and culture, 'Britain's Greatest Battles' asks you to decide which of them was the greatest test for Britain's military and the biggest success.

This exhibition is part of NAM's 'Britain's Greatest Battles' online and event programme. Visit the website to discover more about the battles and to vote on which should be included among the five represented at the planned all-day speaker event which will determine Britain's Greatest Battle.

The criteria for the Top 20 Battles are as follows:

- These battles demonstrate diverse factors including chronology/geography/types of warfare, as well as impact and tactics.
- The list as a whole reflects and is supported by the museum's collection, which stretches from the English Civil War to the present day.
- All kinds of 'battles' have been considered, including sieges, campaigns, last stands, and charges.
- The list features a blend of the famous and the less well-known battles from across the world.
- Battles were not chosen simply for being the 'greatest' British victories. Their inclusion considered the political/historical impact of the battle, the difficulties and challenges the Army overcame, and the innovative deployment of strategy and tactics.

Britain's Greatest Battles

(Throughout March)

National Army Museum
Royal Hospital Road
Chelsea
London SW3 4HT

020 7881 6606

www.nam.ac.uk

**FREE
ENTRY**

EVENT

Belfast's berth-day

To mark the 75th anniversary of the launch of HMS *Belfast*, the Imperial War Museum will bring the ship to life with re-enactors, simulated gun firing, live radio transmissions, and a communal craft activity on board. HMS *Belfast* had a lively war: having struck a mine after just two months at sea, she returned to protect the Arctic convoys from 1942, as well as supporting the D-Day Landings in 1944.

HMS Belfast Anniversary

16-17 March 2015

The City of London

16-17

16-17



020 7940 6300

www.iwm.org.uk

FREE
ENTRY

EXHIBITION

Painting the past

This new exhibition will be the first retrospective of work by American realist painter George Bellows to be held in the UK. One of his best-known subjects was the execution of the British nurse Edith Cavell, which he read about in the *New York Times*. She was celebrated for saving the lives of soldiers from all sides and helping Allied soldiers escape from German-occupied Belgium during WWI. She was arrested, court-martialled, found guilty of treason, and sentenced to death. Despite international pressure, she was shot by a German firing squad in 1915. A number of lithographs showing the horrors of World War I will be shown, including *The Charge* (1918), which depicts heaps of dead soldiers as others fight on, and *Murder of Edith Cavell* (1918).

George Bellows (1869-1925)
Modern American Art

020 7300 8027

www.royalacademy.org.uk

£10
ENTRY

FAMILY EVENT

Saving Berlin

By the end of the Berlin Airlift – which peaked on Good Friday 1949 – over 400,821 tonnes of food, coal, and supplies had been carried by more than 689 aircraft into a city cut off from the rest of the world by Russia. Taking inspiration from the display in the Battle of Britain Hall, you can make your own parachute and origami supply box, so you can drop your own supplies. All materials will be supplied. The activity is suitable for over-5s, though younger children are welcome. All children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Sessions run 11am-1pm and 2-4pm.

Easter Airlift



020 8205 2266

www.rafnmuseum.org.uk

FREE
ENTRY

CONFERENCE

Fort preservation



Last year the Fortress Study Group held a very successful symposium at London's National Army Museum, concerned with the preservation of fortifications at risk. Their second symposium will consider further how such fortifications can be reused without the structures losing their historical integrity.

Speakers from heritage bodies in the UK and from overseas, local groups involved with specific fortifications, together with architects, will describe the problems they have faced and the solutions employed in preserving fortifications.

The keynote speaker will be Dr Simon Thurley, CEO of English Heritage.

£95
ENTRY

LECTURE

Aviation's story

Historian and author Patrick Bishop tells the story of the evolution of aerial warfare, from rickety contraptions flying over the Western Front to the high-tech fast jets and pilotless drones operating in Afghanistan today. Patrick will describe some of the extraordinary characters who filled the ranks of the Royal Air Force and the Fleet Air Arm, and Churchill's early involvement with the RAF.

Copies of Patrick's new book *Wings*, a century of aerial warfare will be available to purchase at the event, and Patrick will be signing copies for guests. Advanced booking is required.

Wings: a century of aerial warfare

5 March

Churchill War Rooms

Clive Steps

King Charles Street

London SW1A 2AQ

020 7930 6961

www.iwm.org.uk

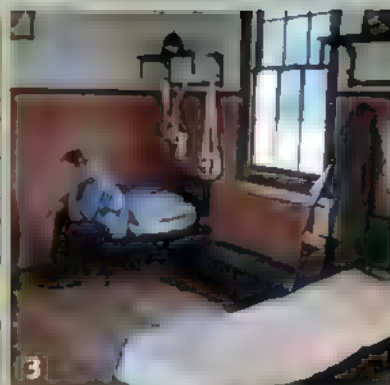
PATRICK BISHOP

WINGS



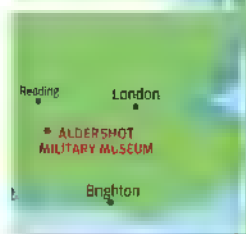
£17
ENTRY

MUSEUM



Aldershot Military Museum

explores the military museum at the heart of the British Army's Aldershot home.



In a small corner of the great military complex that is North Camp, along the grand road that is Queens Avenue, lies the Aldershot Military Museum. This is a smallish local museum which, under the auspices of Hampshire County Council, serves both civilian and military interests.

The museum is housed in four single-storey buildings that are themselves part

of the military history of the area. The central pair of buildings, one of which houses the museum entrance and the social history, are the only barrack bungalows to survive of those built in North Camp in the 1890s.

The first building of the museum complex has been named the Boyce Building. This is a 1930s wooden barrack-block that once formed the Regimental Administration Offices at Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church

Crookham, reconstructed here with the help of a Heritage Lottery grant. Part of the building now, appropriately enough, houses its own reconstruction of a late 1940s admin office.

Samuel Franklin Cody

Once past the entrance and the social history there is a real gem for those of a 'flighty' disposition. This is the Cody Gallery, named after the expatriate American Samuel Franklin Cowdery – a cowboy showman who changed his surname to match the more-famous 'Buffalo Bill' Cody. At nearby Farnborough, in 1908, Cody became the first pilot of a powered flight-machine in Britain.

Not only did he pilot the machine, he also designed and built it. From 1904 he worked for the Army, the result of which was his Army Aeroplane No. 1, in which he made that historic first flight. The Gallery contains a partial reconstruction of Cody's workshop from nearby Laffan's Plain. The woodworking equipment



Left Saxton Self-Propelled Gun, 1945



1. Air Raid Warden's shelter, 1940
2. Cody's workshop
3. 1890s barracks display
4. Challenger Mk I guards Monty's Barn
5. The Boyce Building, a 1930s wooden barrack block
6. Humber 1-ton 'P' g, 1955
7. Searchlight



and sowing machine are reminders of the primitive technology of these early flying machines. Cody's flying helmet and the huge propeller from his 'Cody Flyer' are also on display.

The second of the galleries is the John Reed Gallery, named after the brigadier who founded the museum in 1984. Here are reconstructions of soldiers' barracks from both the 1890s and the 1950s, as well as a room from 1960s married quarters. A mountain of cases, crates, and trunks serve as a counterpoint to the soldiers' rooms, hinting at the travel in soldiers' lives.

A case of small arms, including a Snider Artillery Carbine, dated 1872; the uniform of a private, dismounted, of the 11th Hussars c.1910; and a variety of memorabilia can be found in the gallery. One of my favourite things was a searchlight from WWII, with its four mini-caterpillar feet. This 90cm Mark 6 1939 searchlight was manufactured by Metropolitan Vickers. With its carbon arc light and concave mirror, it had a rating of 100,000,000 candle power and a range of around 7 miles.

The gallery is also quite child-friendly, with lots of activities such as a training tunnel in the section on army training that is there to crawl through. Even more fun, though, is a Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance Tracked (CVRT). This has been partially cut away to allow a child and adult to get in and grab a view through the periscopes. A film-show then allows the passengers to take a trip down Aldershot's Long Valley test track.

Scimitars, Scorpions, and Saladins

Outside the complex of buildings are two complete CVRTs. One is the Alvis FV107 Scimitar, and the other its companion the Alvis FV101 Scorpion. This family of reconnaissance vehicles were designed to replace Alvis's earlier product, the Saladin, of which there is also an example.

The Scimitar is clad in aluminium armour, has a high weight distribution across its tracks, and a 4.2-litre Jaguar engine that gives it a top speed of 55mph. It is armed with a long-barrelled 30mm Rarden cannon capable of defeating light armour. Coming into service around 1972, the museum vehicle's registration number OO SP 98 tells us that it was used for trials and testing (SP = Special Project).

Its relative, the Scorpion, came into service in 1972 and was not decommissioned until 1998. This example spent its early years of service in Hong Kong. The Scorpion was armed with the low-velocity 76mm L23A1 gun, which could fire a variety of ammunition types including high-explosive rounds, and carried either 40 or 42 rounds. It also had a 7.62mm co-axial machine-gun and carried a multi-barrelled smoke-grenade discharger at each side of the turret.

Chieftains and Challengers

Outside the fourth, barn-like building are examples of two British Main Battle Tanks. The Chieftain entered service in 1967, and this particular example served

mostly in Germany with the BAOR (the British Army on the Rhine). Its successor, the Challenger Mark I, finally entered service in 1983. The example at North Camp was a prototype vehicle and spent most of its life as a training vehicle.

The fourth gallery, known as the Montgomery Gallery, was built to house the famous field-marshal's wartime caravans in 1947. It became part of the museum in 1995 and now houses more examples of large military equipment. The first you see is a Willys ¼-ton Jeep of 1943, which after WWII was used by General Sir Brian Horrocks.

There are also some older pieces in the barn, including a Military Pattern General Service Wagon, c.1898, which featured in the film *Oh! What a Lovely War*. There is also a nice example of a 1918 18-pdr gun with its original limber. It was the standard British field-gun of WWI, with some 9,400 of them having seen service by the end of the war.

Other vehicles and artillery pieces can be found dotted around the museum buildings, and altogether form a fine little collection. ☺

The Aldershot Military Museum is open 10am-5pm Wed-Fri, and 11am-4pm on Sat and Sun. Admission for adults is £3.20, or £2.10 for children.

0845 603 5635

www3.hants.gov.uk/aldershot-museum.htm

Cropredy Bridge

Stephen Roberts visits the site of a little-known encounter of the English Civil War in the summer of 1644.

The Battle of Cropredy Bridge, fought on 29 June 1644, was complex in its fighting, yet simple in its origin. If ever a battle was fought simply because there were two opposing armies close to one another and able and willing to fight, this was it.

The war had been going badly for the Royalists, and the King had been in great danger of coming under siege in Oxford, with Parliamentary armies under Sir William Waller and the Earl of Essex in the vicinity. Fortunately for the King, Waller and Essex, who did not see eye to eye, decided to split up, with Essex heading west to relieve the Siege of Lyme, leaving Waller to continue tracking Charles.

The King ignored the option of marching on London, which might have given him a better chance of winning the war, and headed instead towards Banbury.

A sequence of feints and marches eventually led the two forces to close on one another in rural Oxfordshire. Conflict was inevitable; both parties were simply trying to find the best

position. By the 27 June Waller had reached Hanwell Castle to the west of the River Cherwell, the King being about five miles away in Edgecote, scene of an earlier battle during the Wars of the Roses. On 28 June the King moved to Banbury, resolved on a fight, although Waller held the high ground.

The approach to battle

On Saturday 29 June the King began marching his force northwards along a ridge east of the River Cherwell. Waller, having halted at Great Bourton, had now taken closer order and was shadowing the King on a parallel ridge west of the river. The two armies were no more than a mile apart and could see one another, with the river in between. This must have been unnerving for both parties.

The Cherwell was to play a key role in the battle, as there were a number of crossing points – at Cropredy itself, at Hay's Bridge to the north-east, and at Slat Mill to the south. Waller was aware that these gave him chances to cross the river and attack the King's army

Above Cropredy Bridge – a 1930s replacement of the 14th-century original that featured so heavily in the battle. **Below** The village sign at Cropredy, showing crossed swords, the date of the battle, and a Civil War helmet.

in the flank. Thus might he bring on a battle that would extend across several miles of countryside.

Battle was joined at about 1pm and lasted until sunset. The Royalists probably had the larger army, between 9,000 and 10,000 troops, with Waller having around 6,000. Some sources, however, claim that the strength of



the opposing armies was more finely balanced than this.

The King is said to have eaten his 'dinner' under an ash tree on the day of the battle, so this presumably happened just prior to hostilities commencing, as 'dinner' at this time denoted the main meal of the day, usually being taken around 11.30am.

As he approached Cropredy, four miles north of Banbury, Charles ordered a small detachment of dragoons to capture the vital bridge over the river, which they did. At this crucial juncture, however, he also received intelligence that some 300 Parliamentary horse were two miles away, approaching from the north to reinforce Waller's army. The King spurred his troops on, intending to cut off this small force, but in the process stretched out his own battle line.

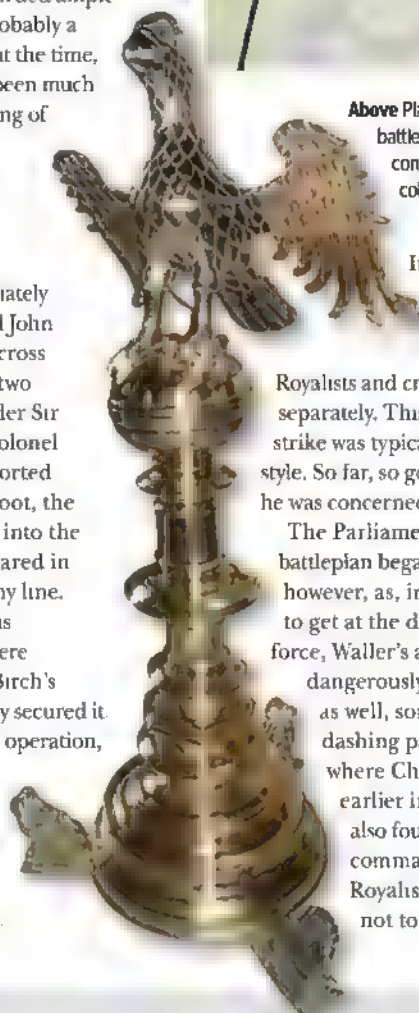
The Royalist vanguard and main body crossed at Hay's Bridge on the eastern side of the field, leaving the rearguard, of two cavalry brigades and some infantry under the Earls of Cleveland and Northampton, trailing a mile or more behind.

It is possible that the King had been lulled into a false sense of security, allowing his forces to be separated in the belief that the river afforded ample protection. This was probably a reasonable assumption at the time, as the river would have been much wider prior to the building of the Oxford Canal.

Waller's attack

It was at this point that Waller sensed his opportunity. He immediately sent Lieutenant-General John Middleton clattering across Cropredy Bridge with two regiments of horse under Sir Arthur Haselrig and Colonel Jonas Vandruse, supported by nine companies of foot, the intention being to pile into the gap that had now appeared in the middle of the enemy line.

The Royalist dragoons defending the bridge were overpowered, Colonel Birch's Parliamentarians quickly secured it. In conjunction with this operation, Waller himself led a thousand men across Slat Mill Ford a mile to the south, intending to hit the Royalist rearguard from behind.



Above Plan of the Battle of Cropredy Bridge, showing the dispositions at the height of the battle. **Right** The lectern at St Mary's Church, Cropredy, allegedly recovered from deliberate concealment in the River Cherwell 50 years after the battle. Note the different colour of one of the lectern's lion feet, which was missing and had to be replaced.

It was a simple plan, conceived in haste, to divide the

Royalists and crush the two halves separately. This opportunistic strike was typical of Waller's style. So far, so good, as far as he was concerned.

The Parliamentary battleplan began to unravel, however, as, in the rush to get at the divided Royalist force, Waller's army now became dangerously over-extended as well, some of them dashing past the ash tree where Charles had dined earlier in the day. Waller also found that the dual commanders of the Royalist rearguard were not to be messed with.

Royalist counterattack

Fierce fighting broke out at Hay's Bridge, as Middleton's cavalry was held up by Royalist musketeers, who had overturned a carriage to block the bridge. The Earl of Cleveland took advantage of the Parliamentary discomfort by attacking their foot and the artillery, which was lumbering along behind and 'thought the devil had come upon them in a cloud of dust', as they began to retreat untidily towards Cropredy Bridge. Middleton's cavalry, having been repulsed at Hay's Bridge, would soon be caught up in this mêlée as well, contributing to the disorderly withdrawal.

In the southern part of the field meanwhile, the teenage (yet experienced) Earl of Northampton had taken decisive action, charging his cavalry downhill against Waller's force, surprising them and propelling them back across Slat



Above Hay's Bridge, site of some of the heaviest fighting of the battle. **Inset** The commemorative stone built into the modern Cropredy Bridge.

Mill Ford, whence they had come. The Earl of Brentford's infantry was also in attendance to add to Waller's discomfort.

The King had been informed that his rear had been engaged, and having dealt with the 300 Parliamentarian horse promptly turned his own forces around. He also ordered his Lifeguard of Horse under Lord Bernard Stewart to assist Cleveland. The combined force then piled into Middleton, who was rapidly forced to retreat back across Cropredy Bridge, abandoning in the process 11 guns that had earlier been hauled over the river. Waller's Major-General of Ordnance, Sir James Wemyss, ended up in Royalist hands in the confusion.

When the King arrived at Williamscot at about 3pm, he ordered attacks on both Cropredy Bridge and the ford, and a bombardment of the Parliamentarian vantage-point to the west on Bourton Hill, with Charles allegedly doing some 'target spotting' using his 'perspective glasses'.

Thankfully for the Parliamentarian cause, Cropredy Bridge remained in

their hands, with two regiments of foot, Colonel Ralph Weldon's Kentish Regiment, together with the Tower Hamlets Regiment, resisting Royalist attempts to take the bridge.

Had the bridge fallen, a rout would inevitably have followed. Waller's remaining artillery continued to bombard the Royalists from Bourton Hill, forcing a withdrawal. Waller took the opportunity to pull back most of his own forces to the safety of Bourton Hill, while continuing to hold the bridge, although the Royalists did achieve a small bridgehead across the ford.

Disengagement

As evening fell, the two armies faced one another from either side of the river, just as they had at the beginning of hostilities several hours before.

An attempt was made by Charles to negotiate with Waller, but his offer was rejected. Waller's mind was perhaps made less amenable by having a floor collapse during a meeting with senior officers, plummeting everyone into a cellar.

Believing that 4,500 Parliamentarian reinforcements were on their way from London, and also running short of food and supplies, Charles elected to slip away under cover of darkness, marching west for Evesham and taking the 11 pieces of captured ordnance with him. Charles's army had suffered few casualties in the fighting, but Waller's force needed to lick its wounds, having lost some 700 men, including deserters.

Waller's army was rendered ineffectual by what was undoubtedly a defeat, with those soldiers who remained, mutinous and demanding back-pay. This allowed the King to turn his attention to Essex's army, following it to Cornwall, where it was defeated two months later at Lostwithiel.

For the Parliamentarians, highly significant conclusions were drawn from Cropredy Bridge. First, the poor performance of their force during the battle led in no small part to the formation of the New Model Army. Second, Waller's performance at Cropredy Bridge determined that he would not be its commander.

The battlefield today

This is one of Britain's least altered battlefields, with the

terrain either side of the river having changed little in the ensuing centuries. The canal and a railway line are the only significant additions to what remains a predominantly agricultural landscape. 'If the ghosts of King Charles and Waller were to attempt a recreation of the battle, they would be able to re-enact the same violence in the same places', reports one battlefield expert. It is also one of the most spread-out Civil War battlefields.

There are two bridges at Cropredy Bridge today, as there is also a bridge over the Oxford Canal; but the only bridge present in 1644 was the one over the Cherwell. The original 1312 bridge has long gone, but its 1930s replacement is in the same place.

To the east of the bridge are the fields where Middleton's cavalry charged impetuously towards Hay's Bridge. The recreation ground to the east of the bridge is the best place to get a decent view of the bridge and the parish church of St Mary the Virgin behind.

The church is interesting, as there is Civil War armour on display. Regrettably,



Above View over the battlefield from Wardington. Middleton's retreat would have been from right to left, heading back towards Cropredy. **Right** Peewit Farm, close to Slat Mill. It was here that Waller was thrown back.

this is only replica armour, as the original, dug up by the riverbank, was stolen. Some of the church valuables were allegedly hidden in the river prior to the battle and not recovered for 50 years. When the lectern was found, one of its brass lion feet was missing. Its replacement was mistakenly made in bronze, which is very obvious today because of its different colour.

There is a plaque on Cropredy Bridge itself commemorating the battle, which bears the simple epitaph 'Site of the Battle of Cropredy Bridge June 1644, From Civil War Good Lord Deliver Us'. There is also a modern interpretation panel, erected beside the bridge in 2005 by the Battlefields Trust.

A footbridge now crosses the river at Slat Mill Ford to the south, where Waller crossed the river and was then beaten back by Northampton. The ruins of Slat Mill can also be seen here next door to Peewit Farm.



The Wardington Ash, under which King Charles is alleged to have eaten his lunch, no longer stands, but a solitary ash tree can be found in a corn field on the left of the A361 as you drive from Williamscoot to Wardington in the south-east corner of the battlefield. This could be its descendant. Enclosure of the

once-open fields around Wardington is the only other major change that Waller and the King would notice.

There is a bridge at Hay's Bridge, which marks the north-eastern corner of the battlefield. This is where some of the heaviest fighting took place as the Parliamentarian attack was firstly held up and then thrown back. ☐

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MARCH 2013

MHMReviews

DVD TV BOOKS



March Neil Faulkner tackles John D Grainger's *Battle for Syria* for this month's lead review, finding one or two shocking comments. Other new titles include *Into the Silence* by Wade Davis and *In the Hour of Victory: the Royal Navy at war in the Age of Nelson* by Sam Willis.

The Military History Channel's March is packed with new series and revealing documentaries. *The True Story* explores the actual background to some of the best-known war films, while the new episodes of *Top Shots* will bring more of the high-octane sharp-shooting contest.

Our DVD is the recently re-released box-set of Ken Burns' *The Civil War* – a must-see for any military-history enthusiast.

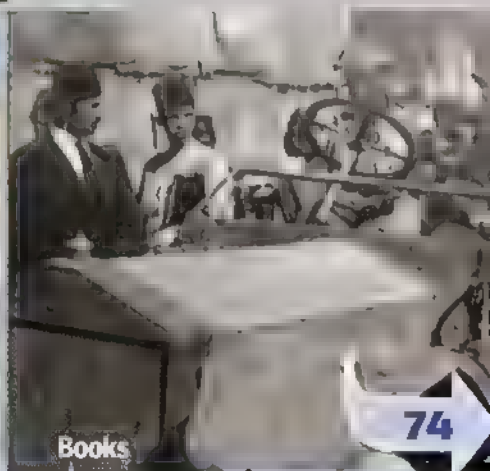


DVD

72



73



Books

74

DVD

THE CIVIL WAR



PBS
29 MARCH 2011
£33



'The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days – perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to

write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more...

'But, O Sarah, if the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the gladdest day and in the darkest night... always, always; and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath, as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah, do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again.'

Thus wrote Sullivan Ballou of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry Regiment from a Union encampment at Washington to his wife on 14 July 1861. A week later he was killed at the First Battle of Bull Run.

Ken Burns features Ballou's entire final letter towards the end of the first

of the nine programmes that form his 11-hour TV documentary series charting the course of the American Civil War. It is emblematic of his approach. History is told from above and below, in all its grandeur and all its suffering, but using the most simple of devices

There is no CGI, no reconstruction, no fancy tricks. His technique, as he explains it himself, is 'the careful use of archival photographs, live modern cinematography, music, narration, and a chorus of first-person voices'. These, he avers, do more than simply recount a story. They become 'a kind of "emotional archaeology", trying to unearth the very heart of the American experience; listening to the ghosts and echoes of an almost inexpressibly wise past.'

If the wisdom comes from the past, the series is a masterpiece in the way it communicates that wisdom to a modern audience. Burns 'gets it' in a way that few other TV documentary filmmakers ever do, with their rush from one commission to another, their obsession with sound-bite and special effect, their lowest-common-denominator zeitgeist, and their contempt for their audience. *The Civil War*, by contrast, stands with such monuments to TV history as *The Great War* and *The World at War*.

Shelby Foote described the Civil War as 'the crossroads of our being'. It was, quite simply, even more than the Revolution, the struggle that created modern America. Foote features heavily in the series. The author of a superb and vast three-volume history of the war – it runs to 3,000 pages in total and was 20 years in the writing – Foote became a celebrity and a millionaire through his involvement with the film.

His sense of the historical significance of the conflict chimed with Burns' own, and it is this that gives the series its huge power. We understand the absolute centrality of slavery – the way in which it became the prism by which the contradictions tearing the United States apart were concentrated and turned into a mighty conflagration, the way in which the country was bound to divide, to come close to drowning in a sea of blood, and was only thus to be able to reunite, permanently, on a radically reformed basis, in what Lincoln called 'a new birth of freedom'.

The Civil War is the story of the unavoidable human tragedy that was necessary to achieve this transformation. To understand the American Civil War in the way that this series makes possible is to understand America. More than that: it is to peer inside the deepest mechanisms of history, and to grasp the intimate relationships that exist there between economy, society, and politics, between revolution and war; to see, in short, how history works.

Just re-released as a six-disc box set with digitally enhanced images, surround sound, and various special features, Ken Burns' *The Civil War* is unreservedly recommended to all military history enthusiasts. If you have not seen this series before, watch it now. If you have seen it before, watch it again.





TV HIGHLIGHTS

ON MILITARY HISTORY

Sky 531 Virgin Media 236



TOP SHOT - SERIES 3

Premieres 11 March
9pm

From Annie Oakley to William Tell, *Top Shot* taps into amazing feats of marksmanship, the winners and individuals shoot but for a \$100,000 prize package.

Contenders face challenges inspired by real events from Medieval crossbow contest to Wild West gunfights and modern-day sniper missions. Every episode reveals the weapons, technologies, and tactics of a different era, while high-speed HD cameras capture each skillful execution with breathtaking precision.

CASH COWBOYS

Premieres 4 March
6pm



Join the Cash Cowboys for an incredible coast-to-coast adventure as they rummage through barns, basements, attics, and sheds in search of hidden treasure. Professional 'pickers' Sheldon and Scott will buy anything from motorbikes and memorabilia to folk art and rare albums - and just about anything else they can make a profit on. But it's not just about the money: it's about a passion for the past, and the thrill of the hunt.



DMZ

Throughout March
Weekdays 5-8pm

Focusing on investigation, intrigue, and exploration, *DMZ* brings some of the History channel's most fascinating and entertaining shows to the Military History channel.

THE TRUE STORY (PART OF DMZ)

Premieres 11 March
5pm

The *True Story* is a documentary series revealing the real life events behind well-known feature films. Was James Bond really Ian Fleming? Was Indiana Jones inspired by an American adventurer or a German Grail hunter? Did the three prisoners in the film *Escape from Alcatraz* successfully break free, or were they washed out to sea? Now, in its third series, we uncover the actual stories and characters behind *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Gladiator*, *Jurassic Park*, *Jaws*, and *Titanic*.



EASTER SPECIALS ON MILITARY HISTORY THIS MARCH

29 March

8am-midnight

Includes the shows *Chronicle of the Reich*, *Hitler's Island Madness*, *Third Reich: the rise and fall*, and *Hitler and the Occult*.



30-31 March

8am-midnight

Episodes of *Soviet Storm* are shown all weekend on Military History

BOOKS

THE BATTLE FOR SYRIA, 1918-1920

John D Grainger
 Boydell & Brewer, £25
 ISBN 978-1843838036

The Battle of Megiddo (19-21 September 1918) was one of the most spectacularly successful victories in British military history. General Edmund Allenby's Egyptian Expeditionary Force broke the Turkish line defending northern Palestine and routed two entire Turkish armies.

The exploitation that followed was rapid and relentless, the main constraint being logistics not enemy resistance, as one would-be defensive position after another was bowled over before it could solidify. By 30 October, when the Ottoman Empire signed an armistice, a third army had been routed, and the British and their Arab allies had reached Aleppo in the far north of Syria.

The Ottoman Empire had been destroyed. The Turks had been driven out of the Arabic-speaking Middle East, a region they had dominated for three centuries. Control now passed to the British and French empires. Borders were redrawn, client regimes installed, and the modern Middle East – as it still exists today in many of its fundamentals – was created.

In its narrowly military aspects, too, Megiddo was an extraordinary battle. It has been described, with good reason, as 'the last great cavalry victory'. Allenby's combat strength was around 60,000 infantry, 12,000 cavalry, and 540 guns. The Turks were deceived about where the blow would fall. At 4.30am on 19 September, their front-line trenches were deluged with fire. As the barrage lifted, the infantry stormed forwards. Resistance was minimal: most of the defenders were dead, stunned, or in flight; prisoners were soon numbered in thousands. By 7am the leading British cavalry units were already racing through gaps in the shattered enemy line.

Henceforward the cavalry formed the vanguard, breaking into the enemy rear, attacking retreating columns, overrunning strongpoints before an effective defence could be organised. It was British yeomanry, Indian lancers, and Australian Light Horse that destroyed the Turkish 4th, 7th, and 8th Armies. It was cavalry's combination of strategic speed and tactical 'shock and awe' that proved decisive. Again and again, men who might otherwise have rallied and dug in fled in terror when suddenly beset by a mounted charge, thundering through the dust, brandishing lances and sabres.

Despite the subject, however, *The Battle for Syria* is not an exciting read; it is a solidly academic volume. A follow-up to John Grainger's earlier study, *The Battle for Palestine*, which centres on the Third Battle of Gaza in late 1917, the book is an efficient and comprehensive summary of the official and regimental histories. It is, in this sense, an old-school military history, faithfully reporting the deployment of this division, the advance of that brigade, the prisoners taken by such-and-such a battalion. As such, it is a useful reference book for specialists (though it lacks decent maps), but is perhaps less than ideal for the general reader. In particular, the 'voices from below' that have become *de rigueur* in modern military-history writing are largely lacking.

Grainger is much weaker on the politics of the conflict. He does

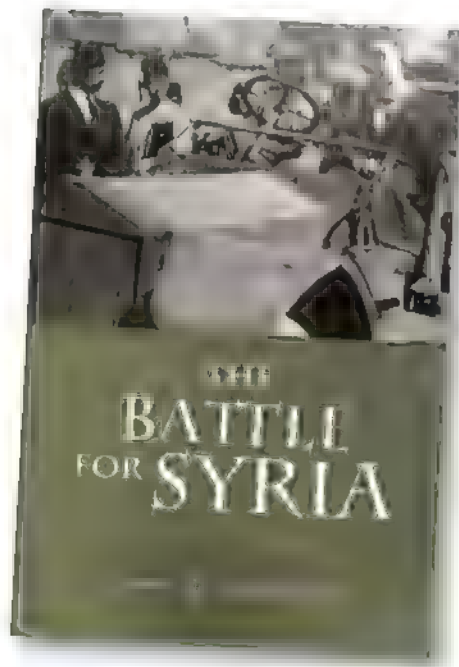
Men who might have rallied and dug in fled in terror when beset by a mounted charge, thundering through the dust, brandishing lances and sabres.

not understand the dynamic forces that powered either the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 or the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. He would have been better steering clear altogether. He seriously underplays the role of the Arabs, arguing that the British did most of the fighting, whereas the evidence is that by 1918 as many Turks were deployed east of the Jordan trying to contain a swelling insurgency as were deployed west of it facing Allenby's army in Palestine. His occasional references to Lawrence seem to assume his mendacity, when modern research implies that *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is, in fact, an exceptionally reliable war memoir. (Ironically, Lawrence has been chosen for the cover photo.)

Most shocking, however, is a note about the Armenian Holocaust. I was astonished to read 'it was not genocide since plenty of Armenians survived'. The implication seems to be that an event should not be classed as 'genocide' unless the perpetrator succeeds in exterminating everyone; no event known to me would qualify.

So, for the record: during the First World War, the Ottoman state deliberately murdered hundreds of thousands of Armenians, possibly as many as 1.5 million, and to reject the label 'genocide' to describe this is a violation of historical truth amounting to Holocaust denial.

Neil Faulkner



Into the Silence

Wade Davis

Vintage Books, £12.99

ISBN 978-0099563839



James Bond is portrayed as the British hero whose literary appearance lifted the spirits of a nation traumatised by the Second World War. It can be argued

that George Mallory fulfilled a similar role after the Great War, as the gallant British schoolmaster mountaineer who in 1921 became the first to set foot on Mount Everest.

Wade Davis, a Canadian scholar who holds the wonderful title of Explorer-in-Residence at the National Geographic Society, has produced a monumental work detailing that very theme: how the carnage of the trenches led to the drive for redemption on the roof of the world. Davis's tale of Mallory and the conquest of Everest makes for 573 pages of fascinating reading.

Just how shattered Britain was by the First World War is chillingly brought home by Davis's reference to the first parade past the Cenotaph in 1919: 'Had the actual dead walked abreast down Whitehall, the parade would have taken four days.'

Mallory resigned his post at Charterhouse in 1915 to enlist as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Garrison Artillery. The following year he took part in the shelling of the Somme. Here is where the schoolmaster came into contact with the grim realities of the Western Front. 'The more immediate horror,' Mallory wrote to his wife, 'was the prevalence of dead bodies and the difficulty of digging in soil certain to yield corpses.' Thus began Mallory's descent towards despair, a decline that could only be reversed by venturing forth 'into the silence' and redeeming puny of Everest's uncharted slopes.

After his war experiences, Mallory realised he could not reinvent himself as a schoolmaster. In 1921 he received a letter from the Alpine Club informing him that Everest would 'really be tried this summer. Any aspirations?' The die was cast. 'In two months,' Davis tells us, 'George Mallory would sail for India in what seemed at the time a good career move.'

Mallory set out with Harold Raeburn as expedition leader, but later assumed

responsibility for exploration when Raeburn's health broke down and he began to go mad. Mallory discovered the hidden East Rongbuk Glacier that led to a possible route up the mountain. In 1922 he returned for what became a disastrous all-out assault on Everest. Two years later Mallory and his climbing partner Andrew Irvine ascended to an unprecedented 26,800 feet on Everest, never to be seen again – at least not until 1999, when what in some mountaineering circles has been dismissed as a party of climbing necrophiles discovered his corpse.

The British, to whom nothing is so dearly loved as heroic disaster, made a meal of Mallory's and Irvine's disappearance. That year King George V and the Royal Family joined a sea of mourners for a memorial service at St Paul's Cathedral. The two climbers' Romantic death fits neatly into the Boy's Own truism that Britain always wins the last battle. Hence less than three decades later, another British expedition, led by Colonel Sir John Hunt, saw Sherpa Tenzig Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary, a New Zealander, become the first human beings to step onto Everest's summit.

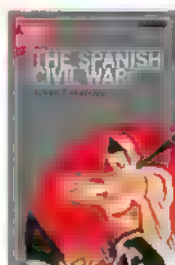
Jules Stewart

The Spanish Civil War

Julián Casanova

I B Tauris, £12.99

ISBN 978-1848856585



Peter Kemp was a soldier who fought for Franco during the Spanish Civil War. One evening at his favourite pub in Chelsea, shortly before his death

in 1993, I mustered the pluck to pop the nagging question: how did he, a product of a society marked by tolerance and decency, come to put his life on the line for a cause allied with Nazism and Fascism?

'You've got to situate yourself in the 1930s, a desperate time in Europe, when there were no shades of grey,' he said. 'I never had much respect for Franco, personally or as a soldier. But I'm a devout Christian, and for me, Stalinist Communism posed a threat to the fundamental values of Western society.'

That Kemp had no sympathy for Hitler and what he represented is evident in the fact that, despite the severe wounds sustained in Spain, he served valiantly with Special Operations Executive (SOE) during the Second World War.

Yet there it was, two titanic forces of evil, slugging it out to impose their equally reprehensible ideologies on a 'marginal, second-class country', as Julián Casanova in his newly translated book *The Spanish Civil War* describes his homeland at the outbreak of war in 1936.

Casanova addresses a question often subsumed in the ceaseless debate on the Spanish conflict: namely, why was there a war? This had nothing to do with outside forces. 'The civil war came about,' the author explains in the concise style that characterises the book, 'because the military *coup d'état* failed to achieve its basic objective at the outset... to overthrow the republican regime.' Once army factions had risen in revolt, once the fault-lines running through Spanish society had burst open into bottomless crevasses, that was when the dictators of Germany, Italy, and Russia jumped in to exploit the bloodbath and strengthen their hand in the coming European conflagration.

'An International War on Spanish Soil' is Casanova's title for the chapter devoted to foreign involvement. The hypocrisy of the European dictatorships is laid bare by the non-intervention treaty signed a month after hostilities began by every country except neutral Switzerland. Before the ink had dried on this farcical document, Franco had received 89 fighter aircraft from Italy and Germany. The first shipment of Soviet arms arrived just weeks later. The stage was set for what has rightly been termed a 'dress rehearsal' for the Second World War.

For the Spanish writer Manuel Chaves Nogales, who spent much of the war in Madrid, the real tragedy was that had it not been for this foreign intervention, the Republic, which controlled more territory, the main cities, and Spain's industrial heartland, could have defeated Franco within months. Chaves arguably makes a convincing case.

Casanova points out that after the defeat of Germany and Italy, the hatred and violence that marked the Spanish war 'lived on in Spain for a long time yet'. Thousands of post-war executions and reprisals, along with nearly four decades of gloating 'victory', have left the fabric of Spanish society with wounds that have yet to heal completely.

Jules Stewart

ON THE HORIZON

Fighting with the Desert Rats: an infantry officer's war with the Eight Army

Major H P Samwell MC

Pen and Sword, £19.99

ISBN 978 1848847668

Samwell's memoir describes his experience of the Second Battle of El Alamein and other battle in which the 7th Argylls were involved. Awarded the Military Cross, Samwell was killed in action on 13 January 1943.



The Silent Service in World War II Edited by Edward Monroe-Jones and Michael Green

Casemate Publishers, £20

ISBN 978 1612001258

This book tells the story of America's intrepid underwater warriors in the words of the men who lived the war in the Pacific against Japan, starting with the early patrols of the S-36s.



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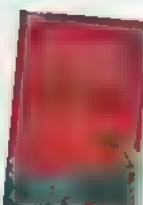
The Rule of Empires: those who built them, those who endured them, and why they always fall

Timothy H Parsons

Oxford University Press, £11.99

ISBN 978 0199931156

Parsons offers a historically grounded cautionary tale rich with accounts of subjugated peoples throwing off the yoke of empire time and again.



The RAF's Air War in Libya

David Sloggett

Pen & Sword, £19.99

ISBN 978-1781590607



In the spring of 2011 with the decision to deploy the RAF and Royal Navy in support of UN Resolution 1973. With no aircraft carriers available and with severe cuts to virtually every area of the armed forces, would the UK actually be able to mount operations over Libya, some 3,000 miles from the UK?

This is central to David Sloggett's skilled analysis of the campaign, its causes, progress, conclusion, and aftermath. The context for his analysis is both the recent succession of defence reviews and the series of wars fought by the UK since 1982. The 2010 SDSR meant that yet again the UK's armed services would have to do more with less, and would require more cooperation with Europe – the resulting updated *entente cordiale* hardly going down well with the Eurosceptics within the government.

Several points stand out: the reaction to the conflict at home ('the court of public opinion'); the ineffectiveness of Libya's Russian-supplied air-defence systems; the speed with which the RAF deployed; the 'commercial rivalry' between the British and French air forces, each keen to attract customers for its respective hardware; the role of NATO; the effectiveness of the RAF's missile systems, and the sheer skill and professionalism of both RAF and RN personnel.

The campaign was the 'swansong' of several ships and aircraft prior to their (early) retirement, and, as the author concludes, successful though operations in Libya were, they were not a vindication of the SDSR. Involvement elsewhere in the future may be a very different proposition. Ultimately, the success of the campaign was due to the inherent flexibility and ingenuity with which the UK's armed forces go about fighting wars. Because of this, the full impact of the SDSR was masked; but with what implications for the future?

David Flinham

The current Coalition Government's Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) was put under the spotlight almost immediately by events in Libya

In the Hour of Victory: the Royal Navy at war in the Age of Nelson

Sam Willis

Atlantic Books, £25

ISBN 978-0857895707



The primary source for this excellent book is the series of original dispatches collated and collected by the Admiralty in 1821 to commemorate eight major naval victories achieved in the period 1794-1806. In 1859 the collection was bound into a magnificent tome, complete with silver-gilt decoration and dark-blue velvet cover, before being consigned to the bowels of the British Library.

Sam Willis has expertly analysed these dispatches to produce a fascinating account of seven of the eight engagements, the Glorious First of June (1794), St Vincent (1797), Camperdown (1797), the Battle of the Nile (1798), Copenhagen (1801), Trafalgar (1805), and San Domingo (1806) – the only omission being Bndport's unsatisfactory action off Groix in 1795.

The dispatches, written in the main by the commanders themselves, immediately after the events they describe, are appositely described by Willis as 'character bled onto paper'. Thus we hear from Howe, Jervis, Duncan, Duckworth, and of course Nelson, among others. Their accounts, despite some understandable inaccuracies, are the 'first draft of history', written under tremendous stress, both mental and in some cases physical.

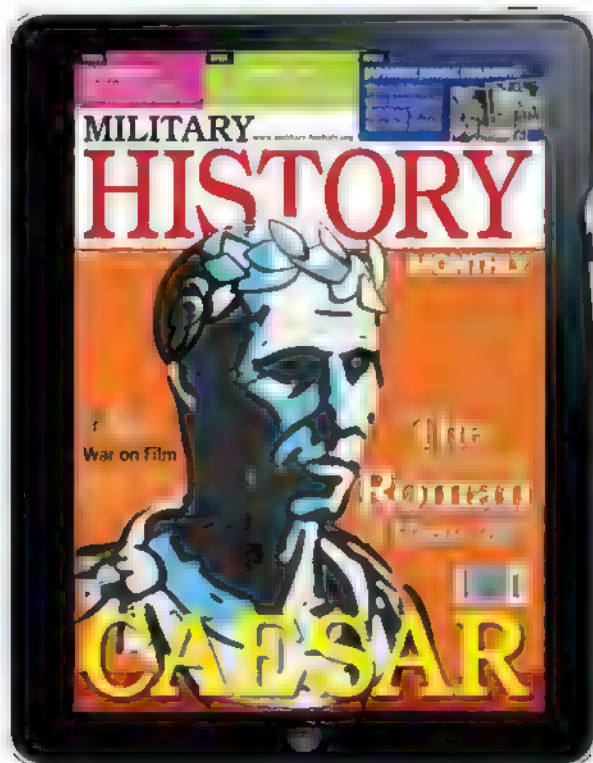
Before describing the actions, Willis provides an admirable introduction to the realities of sea power in the late 18th century. In doing so he emphasises that the period 1794-1806 saw the Royal Navy at the zenith of its power and effectiveness. Never before or since has it achieved such a magnificent string of victories as in that period. He then produces an account of the prelude, execution, and outcome of each of the actions, even observing that Nelson had put on weight in the seven years between the Nile and Trafalgar!

This book comes with colour illustrations, together with an appendix on the three outstanding Secretaries of the Admiralty, and another detailing each of the prizes taken during this momentous period. All in all, a splendid book that comes highly recommended.

Mark Corby

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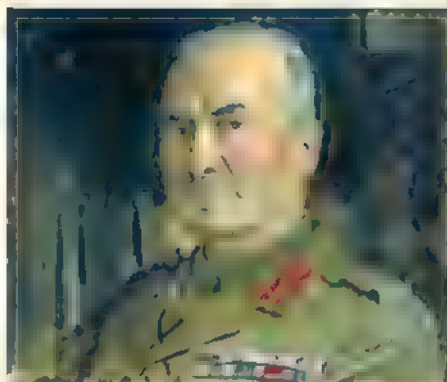
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How the British Army, rundown and fossilised since 1918, crashed to defeat at the beginning of a new world war.



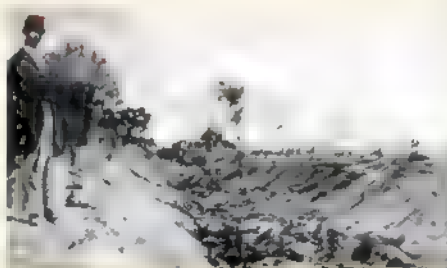
A RADICAL GENERAL

Who won it for Labour in 1945? Roger Broad argues that General Sir Ronald Adam had no small part in it.



CORRELLI BARNETT

We talk exclusively to the veteran military historian as his new book *The Lords of War* is published.



AMERICA'S BLOODIEST DAY

Coinciding with the release of *Lincoln*, we analyse the pivotal Battle of Antietam on 17 September 1862.

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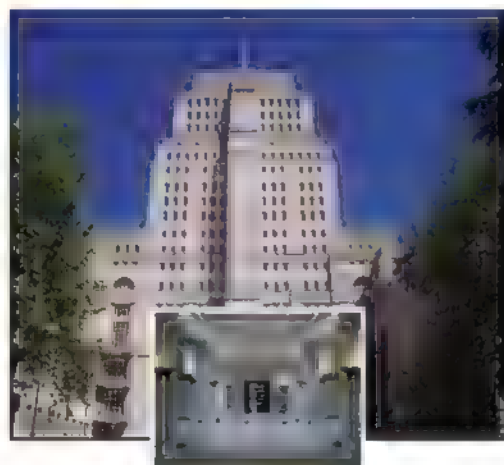
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In 2013, our annual archaeology conference will return to
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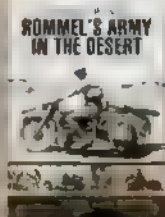


COMPETITION

MILITARY HISTORY MONTHLY

This month we have **TWO BOOK BUNDLES** from **Pen & Sword's** successful **Images of War** series to be won!

THE BUNDLES WILL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING TITLES:



Rommel's Army in the Desert

This collection of photographs is taken from the albums of three members of the vaunted Afrika Korps. For the first time, the daily reality of the North African campaign can be seen from the German point of view. With numerous photographs of vehicles and men at work, this collection paints a portrait of the dangerous conditions and the harsh, brutal nature of desert warfare.



Himmler's Nazi Concentration Camp Guards

This book studies the whole process of recruitment, indoctrination, and performance of those responsible for the guarding of concentration camp inmates. The book studies their behaviour with examples of individuals routinely carrying out appalling acts of cruelty alone or alongside their counter parts. Written and compiled by a highly experienced author, researcher, and collector, the book follows the development of concentration camps from the early beginnings in the 1930s through their establishment in the conquered territories of Poland and Czechoslovakia to the extermination camps of Dachau and Auschwitz.



Armoured Warfare in the Korean War

Korea, with its rugged mountains, narrow passes, steep valleys, and waterlogged fields was not ideal tank country. So the armour mainly supported the infantry and rarely engaged in battles of manoeuvre. Yet the wide variety of armour supporting UN and North Korean forces played a vital if unorthodox role in the swiftly moving campaigns. For this fascinating book, over 180 contemporary photographs have been selected to show Soviet-built T-34/85s and Su-76s; American M4 Shermans, M26 Pershings and M46 Pattons; and British Cromwells and Centurions in action in one of the defining conflicts of the Cold War.

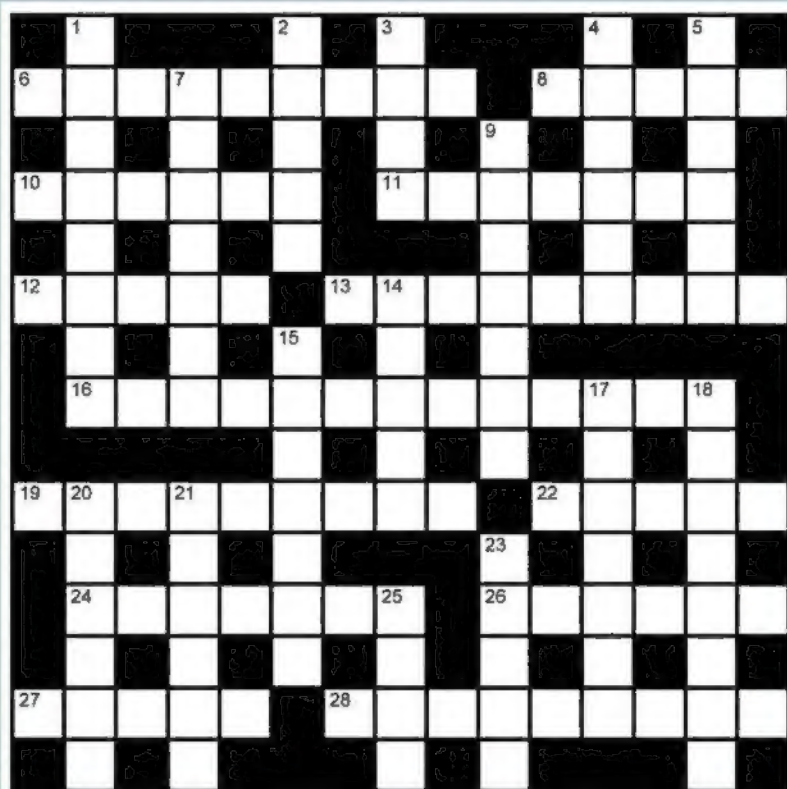
To be in with a chance of winning, simply visit **www.military-history.org** and answer the following questions:

1. What was Rommel's first name?

2. In which month of 1945 was Dachau concentration camp surrendered to the US Army?

3. What year saw the start of the Korean War?

TO ENTER THE QUIZ go to **www.military-history.org**



MHM CROSSWORD

Test your military history knowledge in our new regular crossword. The answers will be revealed in next month's issue of *MHM*.

ACROSS

- 6 Surname of the CO in 1944 of the 3rd Battalion Irish Guards, a military consultant in 16 Across (9)
- 8 See 27
- 10 Music from Elgar's Enigma Variations, always played at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday (6)
- 11 Japanese island captured by US forces in June 1945 (7)
- 12 The ___ Wars, three conflicts fought between Rome and Carthage (5)
- 13 Hampshire town long connected with the British Army (9)
- 16 Film (1977) based on Operation Market Garden, in which Michael Caine played the part of 6 Across (1,6,3,3)
- 19 Explosive devices buried just under the surface of the ground (9)
- 22 Spanish poet murdered by Nationalist forces during the Spanish Civil War (5)
- 24 Army barracks in County Kildare, where a so-called mutiny occurred in March 1914 (7)
- 26 Machine used by Germany in World War II to encrypt messages (6)
- 27/8 Leader of Egypt during the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 (5,5)
- 28 The last fighter designed exclusively in the UK to enter service with the RAF (9)

DOWN

- 1 Roman emperor assassinated by officers of the Praetorian Guard in 41 AD (8)
- 2 Thomas ___, naval architect who designed HMS *Victory* (5)
- 3 Codename for one of the five beaches of the Normandy Invasion (4)
- 4 Town in northern France besieged and captured by the English in 1347 (6)
- 5 ___ Code Talkers, Native American US Marines who developed a secret code based on their own language (6)
- 7 German aircraft manufacturer, famous for the Do 17 bomber of World War II (7)
- 9 ___ Fight, another name for the Battle of Edgehill in October 1642 (7)
- 14 Belgian city captured by German forces in August 1914 (5)
- 15 Rank to which Lord Mountbatten was promoted in February 1953 (7)
- 17 ___ Geyer, German knight who led the Black Company during the Peasants' War in the early 16th century (7)
- 18 City in Virginia which surrendered to the Union Army in April 1865 (8)
- 20 Italian city on the Adriatic Coast captured by the Polish 2nd Corps in July 1944 (6)
- 21 ___ Light Infantry, a regiment in existence from 1881 to 1968, now part of The Rifles (6)
- 23 Indian city besieged by Maratha forces in October 1804 during the Second Anglo-Maratha War (5)
- 25 Alexander ___, US army general, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe from 1974 to 1979 (4)

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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and have your say

CAPTION COMPETITION



We continue our online caption competition with an image from *Caesar*. Pit your wit against *MHM* readers at [www.military-history.org/competitions](#).

WINNER:

Apparently this Gangnam Style dance is all the rage these days!
Alison and Chris Moore



RUNNERS-UP:
Liberty, Fraternitay,
Chardonnay!
Joe Agius

Drink up François, one more sip and Crècy will finally be forgotten!
Melita

Think you can do better?

Log onto [www.military-history.org/competitions](#) to enter the next CAPTION COMPETITION. Flex your funny bone and be in with a chance of getting your caption published in the next issue of *Military History Monthly*!

ANSWERS FEBRUARY ISSUE | MHM29

ACROSS 7 Hustler, 8 Raglan, 10 Fierce, 11 Iroquois, 12 Mirage, 13 Exeter, 15 Plug, 16 Erwin, 17 Gort, 18 Redcap, 20 Edward, 23 Shoshone, 24 Graves, 25 Nantes, 26 Halifax, **DOWN** 1 Audie, 2 Stirling, 3 Seneca, 4 Napoleon, 5 Claude, 6 Engineers, 9 Minesweeper, 14 Allegheny, 16 Explorer, 17 Germania, 19 Cessna, 21 Wagram, 22 Sedan.

Whispering Death

A heavy fighter derived from a light bomber, the Bristol Beaufighter entered service in the summer of 1940 and by the end of the war nearly 6,000 of them had been produced, proving highly effective over both land and sea. This is an incredible record for an aeroplane that was designed in a hurry and was incapable of performing the role for which it was originally intended. However, the Beaufighter, or 'Beau' as it was commonly known, had the good fortune to be in the right place at the right time, benefiting from new technology that helped it to adapt.

During the late 1930s most major powers identified the need for heavy fighters, which could either be employed as long-range bomber escorts or operate in a defensive role as bomber destroyers. Westland developed the Whirlwind, but problems with its Rolls-Royce Peregrine engine delayed production. As a result, the RAF needed something in a hurry and the Bristol Aircraft Company suggested a variant of their Beaufort Torpedo bomber, which had evolved from their Blenheim light bomber. Ordered in February 1939, the prototype Beaufighter flew in July of the same year, and within 12 months Beaufighters were rolling off the production lines, just as the Battle of Britain was raging.

Unfortunately, like Germany's Messerschmitt Bf110 and

Designed in a hurry, the 'Beau' was incapable of performing the role for which it was intended.

Above A Beaufighter in 1951 in its new role as a target tug.

Japan's Kawasaki Ki-45, the Beau was considerably slower than single-engine fighters (its top speed was 320mph, compared to 398mph for the Messerschmitt Bf109 and 408mph for the Focke-Wulf Bf190) rendering it useless for defending RAF

bombers during daylight raids or attacking Luftwaffe squadrons protected by a fighter screen. In fact, the only heavy fighter with sufficient speed and manoeuvrability for these tasks was the American Lockheed P-38 Lightning.

However, the Beaufighter's introduction coincided with the release of the British Airborne Interception radar units for night fighters. With plenty of space in its nose cone and fuselage, and armed with four 20mm cannons, the Beau became the RAF's primary night fighter until late 1943, when it was replaced by the Mosquito.

In another twist of fate, Coastal Command took delivery of Beaufighters and discovered that, once armed with a

torpedo or the 60lb RP-3 rockets, they were much better suited to anti-shipping duties than the Beauforts that were actually designed for that task. More than 2,000 of this variant (TF X Torpedo Fighter) were built, making it the most numerous type of Beaufighter.

But it would be in the Pacific where the Beaufighter's reputation was forged, this time as a ground-attack aircraft used for high-speed low-level attacks on Japanese lines of communication. Its Hercules engine had sleeve valves, which were much quieter than the more common poppet type, and it was rumoured that as a result enemy soldiers could not hear a Beau approaching at speed, only becoming aware once under attack, only hearing the 'whisper' of the engine as it flew away. Impressionable war correspondents reported that the Japanese had nicknamed the Beaufighter 'whispering death', although it is now believed that this title was invented by British pilots to parody clichéd press reports.

After the war, the Beaufighter found new employment, as a target tug, working until 1960, proving that this most versatile aeroplane was exceptionally good at virtually anything – apart from the job for which it was designed. ■



Below A Beaufighter TF X in the RAF Museum.



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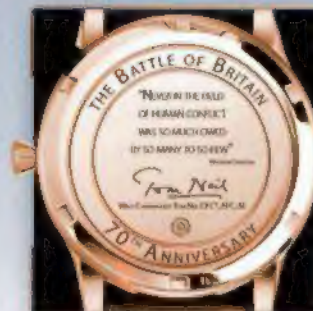
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